Gulf States magazine

NUMBER 2 • 1982

Beaumont's Kaleidoscope Festival gives youngsters a chance to test their artistic talents.

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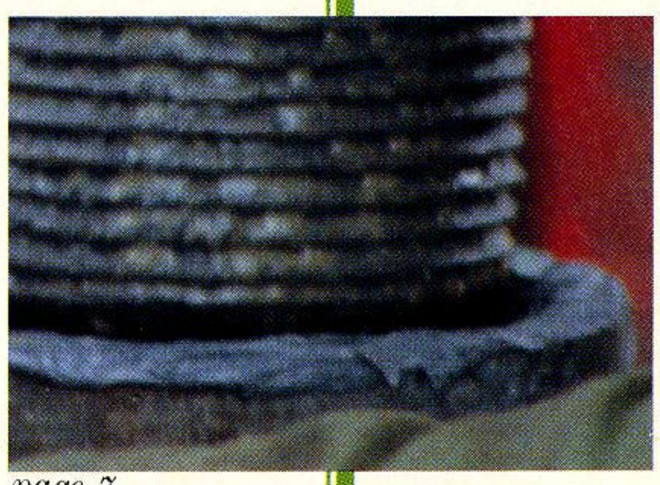
About the cover
The hoary azalea is not edible, but it provides a feast for the eyes —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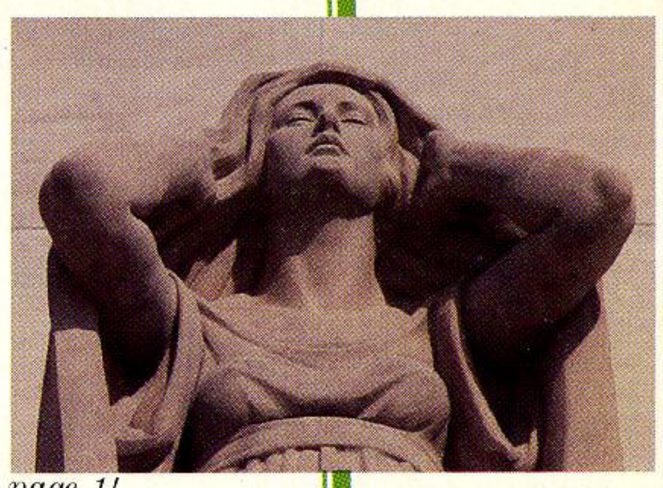
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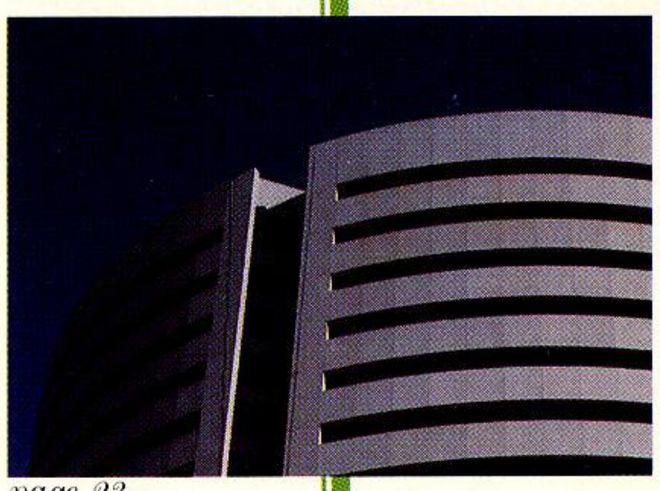
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Oil Industry Jobs:

No Longer for Men Only

by Bruce Schultz

Life in the oilfield was once quite simple. The husband worked with his fellow males while the little woman cooked the meals, cleaned the house and raised the kids.

But that changed, somewhat, as the demand for petroleum increased with women's growing independence. A tradition of "Men Only" was replaced with "Help Wanted."

That's not to say men still aren't the dominant figures in the oil and gas industry. But it's becoming more and more common for women to don hardhats to earn their ranks in the oilfields.

Karen McBride has been in the industry for almost six years, working in Lafayette, La., as a geologist.

After Karen graduated from Texas Tech with a major in earth science and a minor in Spanish she was employed as a secretary for her sorority, traveling to various colleges in the east.

But she later returned to school and earned her master's in geology at Texas A&M.

"It is a great feeling that I did the right thing by going back to school," said Karen.

Her job carries considerable responsibility. Often her decisions, based on complex charts and graphs of sound recordings, help determine where a multi-million dollar drilling effort should be undertaken. She is also handed the assignment of deciding how much a well can produce. Presently, her work involves a North Louisiana field which has proven to be quite successful — not a dry hole yet.

She admits, however, it's not always expected that a geologist will be as fortunate at calculations of where, how deep and how much. Karen recalled one of her first assignments involved a site that, on paper, was a sure investment towards a profitable drilling venture.

"That was such a good prospect," she said. "My company rejected purchasing the lease, then another company bought it and drilled a 19,000-foot dry hole. I guess, that's what you call a geologic success but an economic failure."

She's the only woman geologist with the company but that's OK with her. "I've always been very comfortable with men," she said. "I always hated parties where I got stuck with women talking about babies and labor pains." Karen has no plans for a family, revealing she has little patience with children.

She's admittedly always been a tomboy, especially since she grew up on a South Texas ranch near Corpus Christi, Texas. "I climbed every tree and wanted to be able to go out and work cattle like everybody else," she said. "It used to make me so mad when Daddy wouldn't let me work the cattle."

Quite naturally, she enjoys the opportunity to get out in the field to work, although she wouldn't want any part of the strenuous manual, blue-collar jobs with the oil business. "I definitely hold no illusions that it's a glamorous job," she said. "And, boy, am I ugly in a hardhat!"

Every man she's worked with hasn't always accepted her as equal, she admits. "My first boss thought I was doing fine, but he called me in one day and said, 'I didn't want you to work in this division because you're a woman'," she remembered.

While she isn't a militant feminist, Karen says she does get rankled at sexist remarks such as, "You should be home taking care of the children."

"They guy who hired me here asked if I would mind if he opened doors for me, and I said, 'Not if you mind me opening doors for you'."

Although it doesn't upset her, she discloses that her male superiors often are concerned about

her welfare while working in the field.

But then there's the barb that really raised her hackles. Because of her sex, she and four other women were denied membership with the Lafayette Petroleum Club, a group of professional-level employees of oil and chemical companies.

"Boy, was I mad when I found out I had been rejected," she recalled. "But you can't just blow up because then people say, 'Uh-huh, you're so emotional'."

Karen and the four other women decided not to accept their exclusion. They hired a lawyer and filed a lawsuit against the club, asserting the organization is a professional group which would further their careers. Valuable professional information is exchanged at the club, they insisted in the suit.

"It provides an equal footing with others coming into the industry," she said. "And this is an industry where you get things done by knowing people."

But the club has maintained it is simply a social group which has the right to accept or reject any applicants.

A federal judge agreed, but the women's attorney, Colleen McDaniel of Lafayette, will argue an appeal before the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

"It's not fun," Karen said of the litigation. "I wish we didn't have to do it. I wish people would realize that the world evolves."

Karen believes that the older, independent Petroleum Club members are probably the most strident advocates of an all-male organization. "I can understand, but I don't agree," she said. "It's time they accept us as human beings."

She has misgivings about the Equal Rights Amendment. "I don't really know," she said. "I waver back and forth on it."

But most of her reservations are over amending the Constitution. "It would wipe a lot of laws off the books," she said, although guessing her bout with the Petroleum Club would not have been precluded with the ERA.

Bonnie Maillet of Lafayette set aside her secretarial skills 11 years ago to begin a career in the Oil Patch. She admits she had few ideas of the pitfalls and risks when she began selling oilfield supplies. "I was only 26 years old and didn't have enough sense to realize what I was doing was supposed to be hard," she said.

Karen McBride

It took about a month and 50 calls before she made her first sale. "I just had to wait my turn," she said. "But I'm just a little puppy dog nipping at the big person's heels — I'm always there. If a competitor drops the ball, I'm just going to be there to pick it up."

As she learned the business, Bonnie admits, there were times of frustration when she was certain that being a woman was a disadvantage. "But I don't like to say that," she added.

Bonnie explained that, as she sees it, her male counterparts have occasionally lost out on a sale, perhaps because they were bald, short old, young, spoke with an accent or any other possible features.

"My restriction is that I'm a woman, but everybody's got restrictions," she insisted. "I know some guys who have called on companies for 15 years and never get a crack at a sale," Bonnie added. "So it's not fair to say, 'Yes, I was discriminated against because I was a woman.' "

And there have also been times when potential customers have been interested in more than just her product. "But I have a tacky saying that if you're not fishing, don't throw out the bait and then nobody's going to take the line," she said. "So present yourself in a professional manner, know your product, know your company's ability to service and stay away from 'Oh gee, I'm just so helpless'."

"I mean, bull! If you're helpless get the hell out of here," she said. "Don't use feminine ploy. Not if you're in it for the long haul."

And when someone does make a suggestive remark, she believes the best way to handle it is not by angrily rebuffing the comment. "You handle it with class and disregard it as a joke," she said matter-of-factly. "I'll say something like, 'You're such a big stinker. One of these days somebody's going to take you seriously, so you better be careful.' And then you just go on to something else very quickly."

Through dogged persistence, she continued until she finally broke off on her own, forming her first company, Black Gold, an equipment rental firm.

After selling that business, she formed her second company, Boysenblue International Inc., which sells glass beads used for drilling lubricants. The attractive 37-year-old is now re-entering the equipment sales field, with an emphasis on air compressors and portable air conditioners.

The success she enjoys today may have been only a dream had she continued to work for someone.

"I didn't work well for anybody

else," she said. "I'm very independent and like being on my own. I don't want to have to call Houston to get permission to put up a $15,000 fence to protect a $1 million investment."

But even with an established track record, Bonnie occasionally runs into the male barrier.

During a business deal discussion, an interested leasing agent listens to her mention the advantages of one air compressor over another. The customer eventually decides he wants to arrange the deal with one of the men in her leasing company partnership. But first the customer argues a technical point. She quickly corrects him. He argues with her, then concedes he knew the answer all along. "I just wanted to see if you knew what you're talking about," he said.

One person who undoubtedly has Bonnie's respect is her partner in Boysenblue, Jim Hutch, who started out as a roughneck in 1968.

"I would rather have her as a partner than any man," he said. "I told her one time, 'You are the only woman I have ever met that I would even think of going into business with'."

Perhaps one reason behind her success is her steadfast belief in the oil industry as more than just a way of making money. "It is a way of life, and a fine way of life," she said.

The oil business was probably in Bonnie's blood since she was old enough to walk. Her father, who was a tool pusher, moved the family from oil well to oil well. By the time Bonnie graduated from high school she had already attended more than two dozen schools.

Equality among the sexes is not something Bonnie crusades for. "I have yet to meet one human being who could tell me what Equal Rights Amendment means," she said. "From what I've understood, it's very vague."

"At home, I take care of the inside of the house and Keith (her husband) takes care of the outside — now that's equal," she said, noting she has a maid for domestic chores.

What about equal pay for men and women?

"In this day and age a person's pay scale is determined by that person," she said, adding she feels that if a person doesn't think he's making enough at this present job he should move on.

By the same token, if two people are equally qualified they should be paid equally, she believes. "The oil industry has evolved to accept qualified women, probably more so than other industries."

Her husband is a basketball coach for a private school in Lafayette and she often brings home a higher salary. "That may have scratched his masculinity at one time," she admits. "But it all goes in the same pot."

"Granted, I'm president of this business and another one but Keith's president of our home," she said. "I mean he's head of household. He's the best leader of our family. He's the man for the job."

"He was uncomfortable when I got a Cadillac but I don't have a Cadillac now and I probably won't have one again but I wanted to see how a Cadillac felt on my backside and it felt good." ❑

Bonnie Maillet

Bruce Schultz is a free-lance writer based in Lafayette.

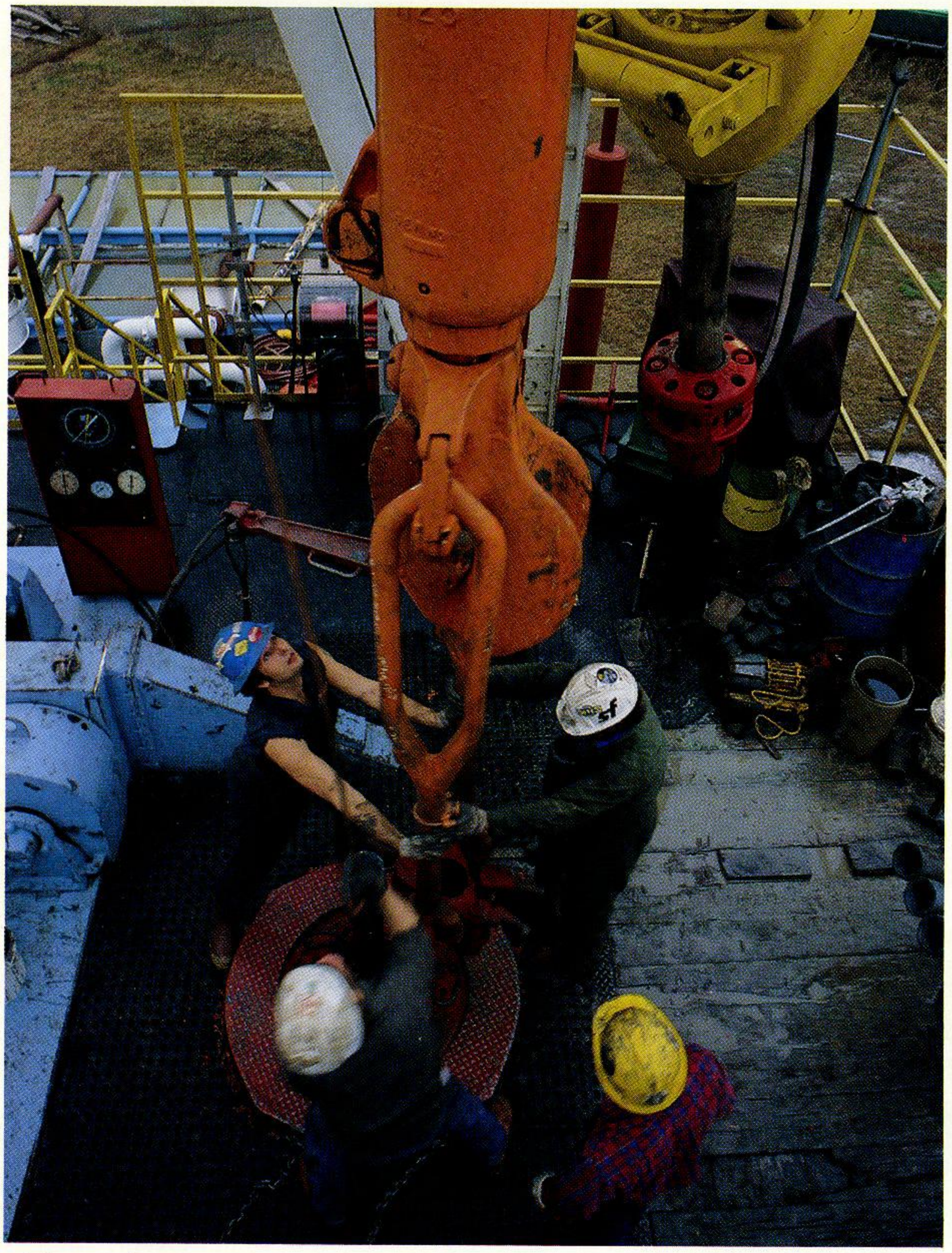
Training Workers for the Oil Patch

by Bruce Schultz

Filling jobs in the Oil Patch with trained workers has become almost as difficult as the quest for petroleum nowadays. But a Lafayette, La., training school is helping meet the industry's labor demand by teaching would-be roughnecks the basics of drilling for oil.

Above all, at this six-week school, students learn that the safest way to perform a task is the only way anything should be done in this hazardous occupation. With tons of mechanized equipment on a rig it makes sense that the less experience a worker has, the more likely he is to suffer an injury, said George Brazzel, who initiated the school five years ago.

Safety can be taught more easily in this setting, simply because an oil company isn't anxiously rushing to see if millions of dollars invested will result in high profits or a dry hole.



The school, administered by Regional Vocational Technical Institute, is a working rig, complete with virtually every piece of equipment needed to drill a well. The equipment, totaling more than $4 million, was donated by 17 oilfield companies, said Brazzel, who owns a rig fabrication company. In turn, contributing companies have a crack at hiring eager employees. The Louisiana Legislature also helped, providing $750,000 to buy the derrick.

Brazzel said he saw a need for such a course in the mid-1970s when he realized experienced workers in the field were becoming as scarce as cheap gas. When the oil boom cranked up after price decontrol, he said, "The industry had more rigs than people." The shortage of workers came after a lull in the industry between 1959 and 1972, just before the energy shortage, he said. With little work available, roughnecks found other ways to make a living.

Brazzel noted it's almost impossible now to learn the ropes the way he did 26 years ago. "I started out working in a crew with three guys who were quite experienced," he recalled. "It's very easy to learn with a crew like that but we've lost those kinds of people who can train others at work.

"In a control situation like we have at the school you can stop and tell a green hand 'Don't put your fingers here in the tongs because if you do your fingers are going to get cut off'," he said.

The wellshaft at the school was capped with concrete at 1,900 feet so there's no chance of a gusher, said instructor Les Viator. "But we do everything else just like on a drilling rig," he said. "It gives them an idea of what they'll be facing.

"It's a hard way of life, and the oilfield is dirty; it's dangerous and it's not all glory and grace," Viator said.

The idea of practical oilfield education has caught on elsewhere. The Lafayette school was the first of its kind, but since it opened last year, a few others have been developed. The University of Texas patterned a similar program around the school at Lafayette, Viator noted.

Trainees here are taught more than just how to connect drilling pipe, occupational jargon and the basics of equipment maintenance. Students also learn first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and offshore survival techniques. In addition, they receive the basics in the most dreaded mishap on a rig — the blowout.

Most students will tell you it was the lure of high-paying jobs that led to their decision to become roughnecks.

"You get the satisfaction of knowing the world needs oil, and they can't get it unless you drill for it — plus the money helps," said Todd Drawhorn, whose family recently moved to Lafayette from North Carolina. "Before we moved here, I had never ever seen a rig in my life, except in pictures," he admitted.

Dave Skomra of Cleveland, Ohio, sees the training as a ticket to not only high pay, but high adventure as well. He hopes to get a job working on a rig in Alaska. "The last frontier," he said, smiling.

Many students have read about the school in national publications. For example, Dennis Swope, a former timber production supervisor in Ashland, Ore., read about the school in Money magazine. His classmate, Ashok Udayamurthy of Madison, Wis., read the same article.

James Landry of Lafayette sees the school as a stepping-stone. He plans to get an offshore job and work seven days on, seven days off. While he's at home, Landry will attend the University of Southwestern Louisiana, which has a scheduling program to fit the needs of offshore workers. □

Illustration by Jack Shofner

Psyching Up and Dressing Down for Hot Weather

by Rick Harvin

Staying comfortable during a muggy Gulf Coast summer when the mercury frequently races toward the top of the thermometer can often be a case of mind over matter, suggests one veteran Texas psychiatrist.

And it can just as often be a case of dressing for the weather by wearing the right colors and the right fabrics, according to textile experts.

The mind creates its own impressions of what is and is not comfortable, and is therefore able to adjust to a wide variety of situations — at least that's the theory of Dr. Robert Rynearson, head of psychiatry at the Scott and White Clinic in Temple, Texas. Rynearson is also in charge of the Department of Psychiatry for the College of Medicine at Texas A&M University.

If you think you are uncomfortable, chances are that you will be — not necessarily because the

temperature or humidity is too high, but because you have convinced yourself.

There's the power of suggestion — weathermen who complain about how hot it is going to be, for instance. And people in the elevator or on the street often have as much influence on how you feel as the weather itself.

Then there are the hot weather hypochondriacs — people who are highly susceptible to suggestion. One fellow we knew would come to the office fit, happy and ready for work, but by the time three of his co-workers (as a joke) told him how bad he looked, he was ready for the intensive care unit. It can be the same way with weather worriers.

Rynearson indicates that positive thinking could be a partial solution to the aggravation and inconvenience of hot, humid weather.

When he discussed "mental comfort," especially in hot weather, Rynearson commented, "In general, people are designed to adjust beautifully to whatever the environment is. I've never seen anyone have any emotional problems because of the weather."

Since Rynearson was trained at the world-acclaimed Mayo Clinic and has been in psychiatry for about 25 years, his statements have the ring of authority.

Of course, there are also physical ways to cope with summer heat, as revealed in a handbook published by the American Textile Manufacturers Institute (ATMI). Jim Morrisey, director-communications for ATMI, also talked to *Gulf States Magazine.*

Research has shown that clothing can affect a person's mental state as far as how one feels about oneself, but it definitely affects one's physical state, too. "Oh, there are your basic things, like bright colors are better than dark and looser weaves give your body an opportunity to breathe," notes Morrisey, giving advice on what's good to wear during hot weather.

Such practical advice helps when the heat waves roll into our part of the country. Rynearson agrees, asserting, "If people use common sense, and are healthy, they can adjust."

Do transplanted Yankees have a harder time adjusting to Gulf Coast heat than natives of this part of the country? Rynearson responds to that question by relating a personal experience:

"I came from Minnesota in '65. I've been an awful lot hotter in Minnesota than in Texas . . . and I've been a lot colder in Texas than in Minnesota," he comments with a chuckle.

When asked about the adaptability of his industry, Morrissey explains that the textile industry has not seen many changes because of the energy conservation movement.

"I don't think that it's something you can actually trace," he observes. "Cotton **is** coming back stronger than it has been, but that's more of a fashion thing."

And Rynearson offers his opinion on how man has changed his environment to adapt to climate variations. "We have the ability to control temperature and conditions. I think we're going to get better and better technically. I'm sure climate control will become even more abundant and accurate."

Mental control can mean a lot in handling the heat, as well, according to Rynearson. He relates the story of a New York writer contacting him to ask whether the 1980 heat wave was causing "catastrophic emotional problems in Texas."

Rynearson recalls that his response was a simple, "No, it's not." Yet Rynearson says that kind of comment, repeated to people often enough, could cause problems. He went on to explain:

"By assuming people are frail and vulnerable, the anxiety level is raised, so they ask if they can manage the heat. Well, the answer is, of course they can."

Rynearson acknowledges that people can get irritable and even violent with the onslaught of higher temperatures. "There's good evidence that violent crime rises when it's very hot, but I think everybody knows that," he adds.

He returns to his theory that mentioning the problem repeatedly can make the problem worse, at least in people's minds.

"I lectured on the drug problem. I found the lectures often promoted drug use, that it was on the rise." That power of suggestion can be just as strong when it comes to hot weather, according to Rynearson.

Sounding almost like an awe-struck first-year medical student instead of a veteran psychiatrist, Rynearson exudes, "We really ought to celebrate how marvelous the human body is and how adaptable it is. Over millions of years, it's been designed to behave perfectly with this planet. And it does!"

The ATMI offers several suggestions of ways to combine the brain and the body in an effort to "cool down" the effects of a scorching summer sun. Among them are tips for covering large glass areas in a home with thick drapes or other coverings to make air conditioning more efficient and for using colorful fabric awnings to bounce the sun's rays off your windows in the summer.□

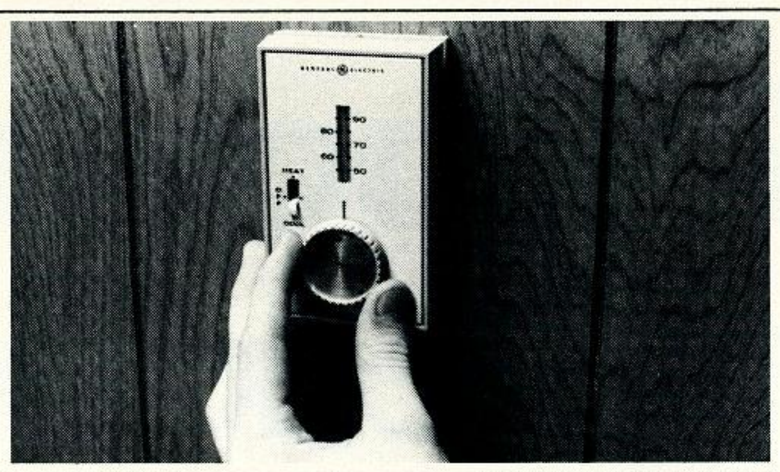
Editor's note: Readers interested in learning more about how to use fabrics to fight hot weather may obtain more information by writing the American Textile Manufacturers Institute at 1101 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Home Conservation Tune-Up Tips for the Summer

You tune your car up, and it gives you more for your money. The same can hold true for your home. A tune-up in advance of the warmer weather, including a check of your home's cooling system, makes sense in saving energy.

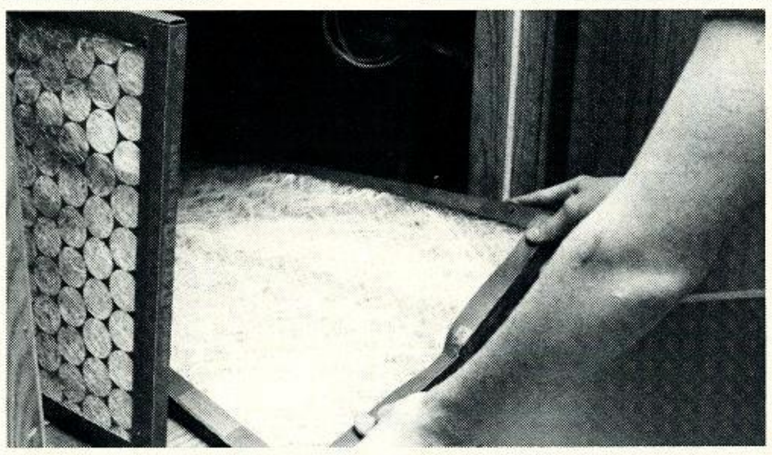
Here are a few tips for some easy pre-summer home tune-up jobs. Look around and you'll probably get more ideas for the summer tune-up that can save you energy and money.

1



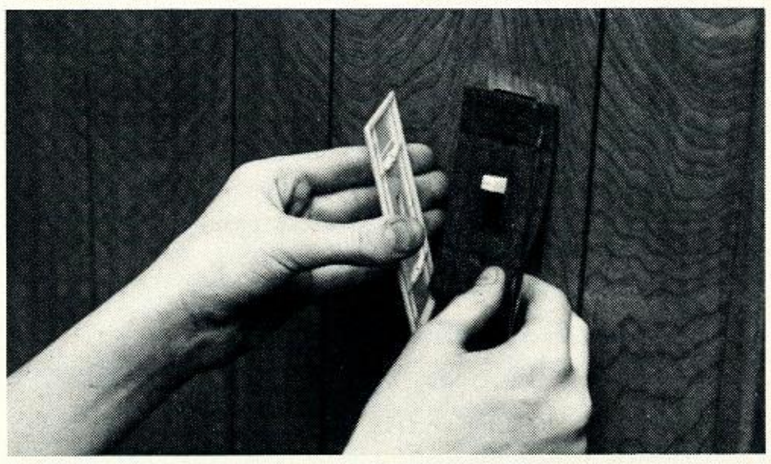
Adjusting the thermostat is a handy idea. This tune-up tip costs nothing, but it can save you plenty. Move the thermostat setting on your cooling system up to 78°F. You'll stay comfortable, and your air conditioning system won't have to work as hard.

2



With dirty filters in your air conditioning system, you get less cool air and the unit runs harder to provide even that cool air. Clean or replace your system's filters as soon as they appear dirty. Local stores carry most sizes, so you shouldn't have any problems finding replacements for your system's filters.

3



Cool air leaks out while the warm air gets in around light switches and wall outlets all over your home. You can stop some of that air by putting inexpensive foam gaskets behind each switchplate. Simply remove the switchplate, put the gasket in place, then put the switchplate back on.

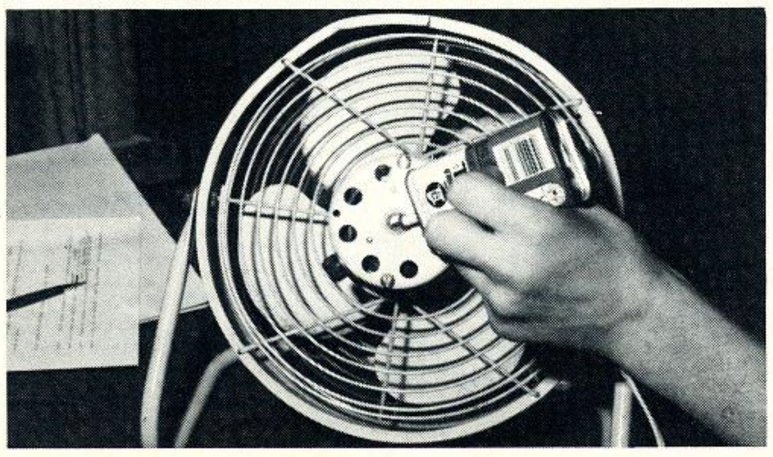
4

When you're ready to use your cooling system, check the ductwork first. Tape up any small rips or loose places, in the ductwork. Then you'll get the air to cool your home, not your attic.

5

For best results inside, do a good cleaning job outside. If any of your cooling equipment is outside, clean away any dirt, twigs and leaves from that equipment. Such debris can decrease the unit's efficiency while increasing the amount of electricity it uses. Clean the outside unit before you turn on the air conditioner switch inside.

6



When it's not too hot, try switching off your air conditioner and stir things up with a fan instead. Check any fans you have (including ceiling fans), and tune them up with a drop or two of oil.

Science Institute: Helping Teachers Pass On Enthusiasm

by Susan Gilley

Jean Anne McCleskey is a diminutive science teacher who tries to impart a big message to her Vidor High School chemistry and science research students.

"The whole idea of learning should be viewed as a positive experience. You don't have to put new information to use today or tomorrow for it to be worthwhile. All learning is exciting and nobody should ever turn down an opportunity to learn," she insists.

That's one reason Mrs. McCleskey says she was so pleased with the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation's 29th Science Institute, held at Lamar University Jan. 25-26 under the joint sponsorship of the foundation, the university, the Texas Education Agency and Gulf States Utilities Co. It was the first-ever institute for the Golden Triangle area and the first one in many years for Texas. Among those addressing the gathering was Alan Bean, retired astronaut commander-turned-artist and the fourth man to walk on the moon.

"The day that I got back from the institute, I told my chemistry classes about everything that I liked about the conference. The students all said, 'Gosh, that sounds so neat! I wish that we could have been there,' " she recalls.

She and the nine other Vidor High School science instructors who attended the institute plan to incorporate aspects of various sessions into their classroom lectures and demonstrations. At least one Vidor High staffer plans to demonstrate laser photography to his classes. The same concept was demonstrated to the teachers by Dr. Tung H. Jeong, professor and acting chairman of the Lake Forest (Illinois) College physics department.

"Something like the institute just brings life into your whole department. I want the students to catch that enthusiasm," Mrs. McCleskey asserts.

The final tally showed that 290 Texas junior and senior high school teachers, visiting scientists and other dignitaries participated in the institute. And Mrs. McCleskey was not alone in naming former Princeton University chemistry professor Hubert Alyea as her favorite speaker.

During his opening address to the gathering, the nimble octogenarian concocted bubbling brews that changed colors and underwent other chemical changes. Alyea also discussed "lucky accidents" — unintentional discoveries of drugs and industrial substances which have had a lasting impact on mankind.

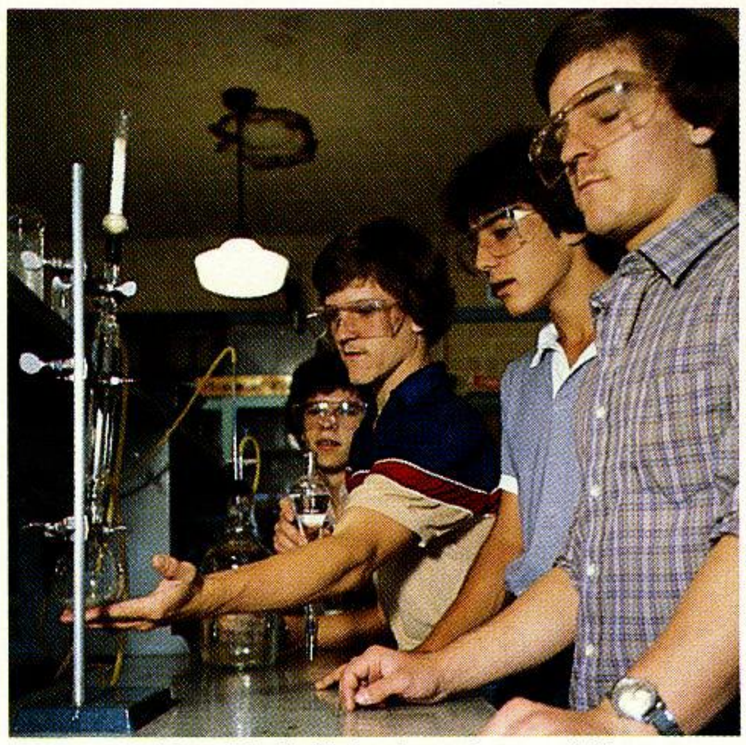
Describing Alyea as "quite unique among science speakers," Mrs. McCleskey notes that he is "always moving and going so fast — he's fun to be around."

Alyea may also be unique in his attitude toward training scientists. During the institute in Beaumont, he advised teachers to encourage their would-be scientists to never lose their humanism, and to be as concerned with literature and the arts as they are with the technical aspects of their chosen field.

Mrs. McCleskey has her own advice for students contemplating careers in science. She believes that "the discipline of engineering" training can be helpful even to those who plan to ultimately enter law or medicine. "For instance, I suggest that they enroll in biological engineering rather than straight biology, or in chemical engineering rather than straight chemistry," she explains. Not only does she feel that such students have an advantage when jockeying for medical school and law school seats, but those who go no further "have a very marketable skill." She continues, "There's so much diversity within engineering. I think there should be some field that appeals to a person."

Even though Mrs. McCleskey advocates engineering as a "marketable" career choice, she admits that she, too, could probably make more money if she were not teaching. Although she worked as a laboratory technician for several area doctors before going back to college, she says she has no regrets as a teacher. When her daughter reached grade school, Mrs. McCleskey first earned a bachelor's degree in secondary education with a science composite, then earned a master's degree in education and supervision, both from Lamar.

"I didn't start teaching until I was almost 40," she notes. Now, 12 years later, she serves as chairman of Vidor High's science department. "There are lots of things that



Four Vidor High School students of Jean Anne McCleskey carry out an experiment in chemistry laboratory. They are (from back to front) Stan Kendall, Keith Mauer, Todd Andrews and Kevin Mauer.

I could probably do to earn more money, but it's rewarding to help young people get started — to help them get excited about learning."

At least from Mrs. McCleskey's standpoint, the institute probably achieved its goals. Back in the autumn, James Cook, president of the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation, told Beaumont journalists, "Our nation is in such dire straits in science education that we're rapidly losing our lead in science technology." Part of the problem, he theorized during the news conference, could be attributed to "a shortage of science and math teachers."

According to Cook, "Anything that will stimulate interest at the high school level (by working with teachers) has to be a positive step. A less and less knowledgeable public is being asked to make more political decisions on science issues."

Other topics covered during the institute included "Animal Behavior — Primate Communications," by Dr. Roger Mellgren of the University of Oklahoma, "The Eruption of Mt. St. Helens," by Dr. W. H. Matthews III of Lamar University and "Genetic Engineering," by Dr. Roger Milkman of the University of Iowa.

Dr. Klaus Keil, director of the Institute of Meteoritics at the University of New Mexico, addressed the topic, "Geological Aspects of Nuclear Waste Disposal." "Genetic Engineering, Crop Plants and World Nutrition" was the topic covered by Dr. Roger Beachy of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. And Mrs. McCleskey mentions "Man and the Coastal Ocean," an address by Dr. Andrew Kemmerer, director of Mississippi Laboratories, as one of the most informative sessions she attended.

Altogether, 16 professors from across the nation, all of whom hold doctorates, addressed the teachers.

While Mrs. McCleskey acknowledges that the speakers represented the "pick of the crop" nationwide in their respective fields, she adds, "There are local people at Lamar who are the equals of many of the ones that spoke. That makes me feel very proud, because we have a lot of talent right here."□

Young Scholars Attend Institute

Ten young scholars, the top contenders in the Thomas Alva Edison/Max McGraw Scholarship Program, also attended the Edison Foundation's 29th Science Institute in Beaumont.

Under the program, high school seniors from throughout the United States, its protectorates and Canada are invited each year to submit entries in the form of an abstract of a proposal, idea or experimental procedure dealing with a practical application in the fields of science and engineering.

One judge termed the latest top entries as "better than or comparable to the work of some graduate students."

As the top entrants among about 6,000 entries, each of the 10 received $1,000 scholarships. In addition, the top two scholars — Thomas Beutner of Michigan City, Indiana, and David Schneider of Nepean, Ontario, Canada — each received $4,000 more and a free trip to the Edison International Birthday Celebration in Essen, Germany, Feb. 26-March 6.

Three southeast Texas residents served on the national panel of judges who reviewed the projects submitted for the program. They were Dr. E. Linn Draper of Gulf States Utilities Co., Dr. C. Robert Kemble, president of Lamar University, and Dr. Samuel S. Lord Jr. of E. I. duPont deNemours & Co., Inc. Other panelists were Dr. Gary Downs, president of the National Science Supervisors Association, and Dr. Joseph J. Huckestein, president of the Council of State Science Supervisors.

Draper said each judge spent about 30 minutes with each applicant, with the student spending 20 minutes discussing the project and 10 minutes answering questions.

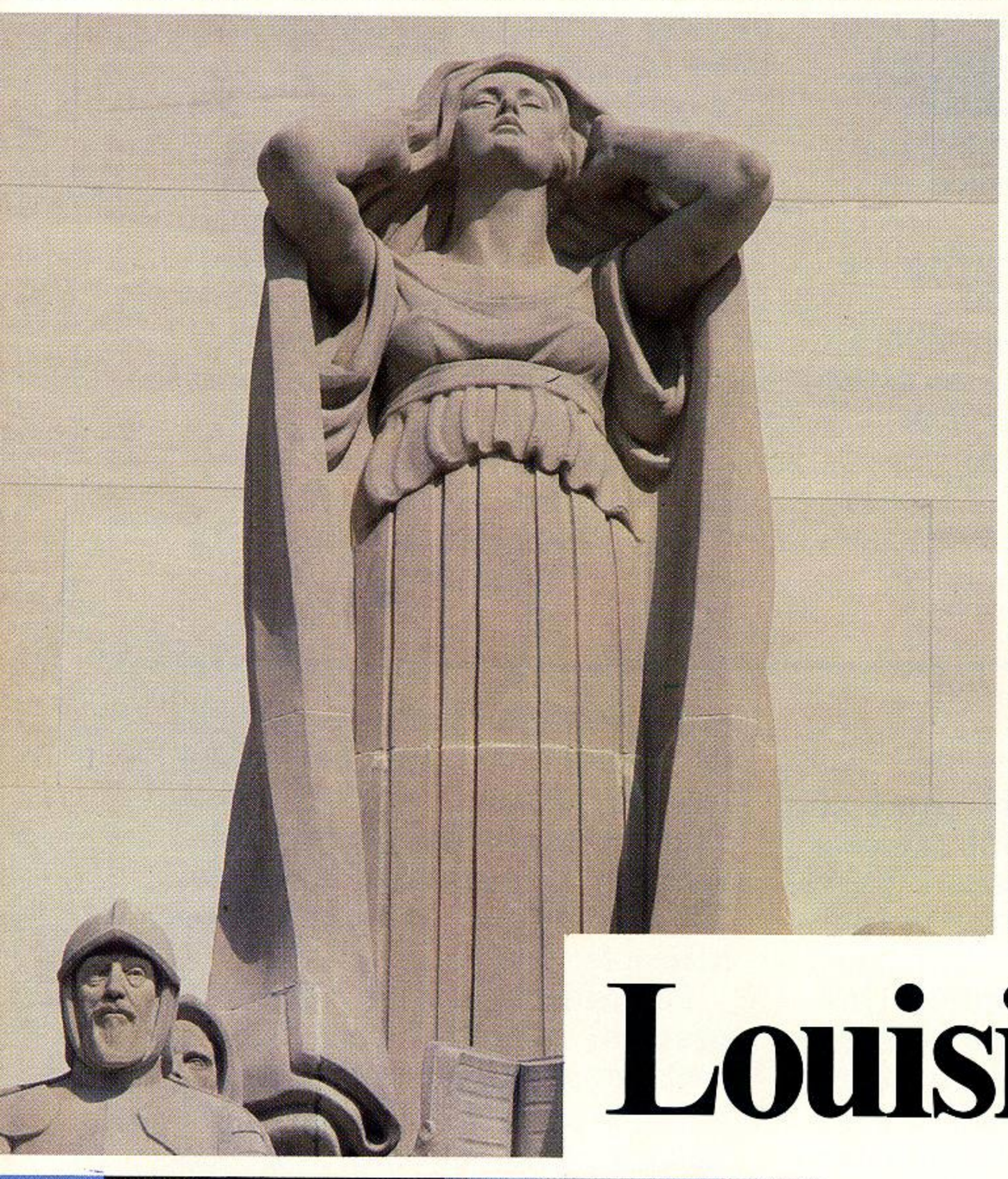
"Projects ranged from some that were highly theoretical to some that were highly practical," Draper recalled.

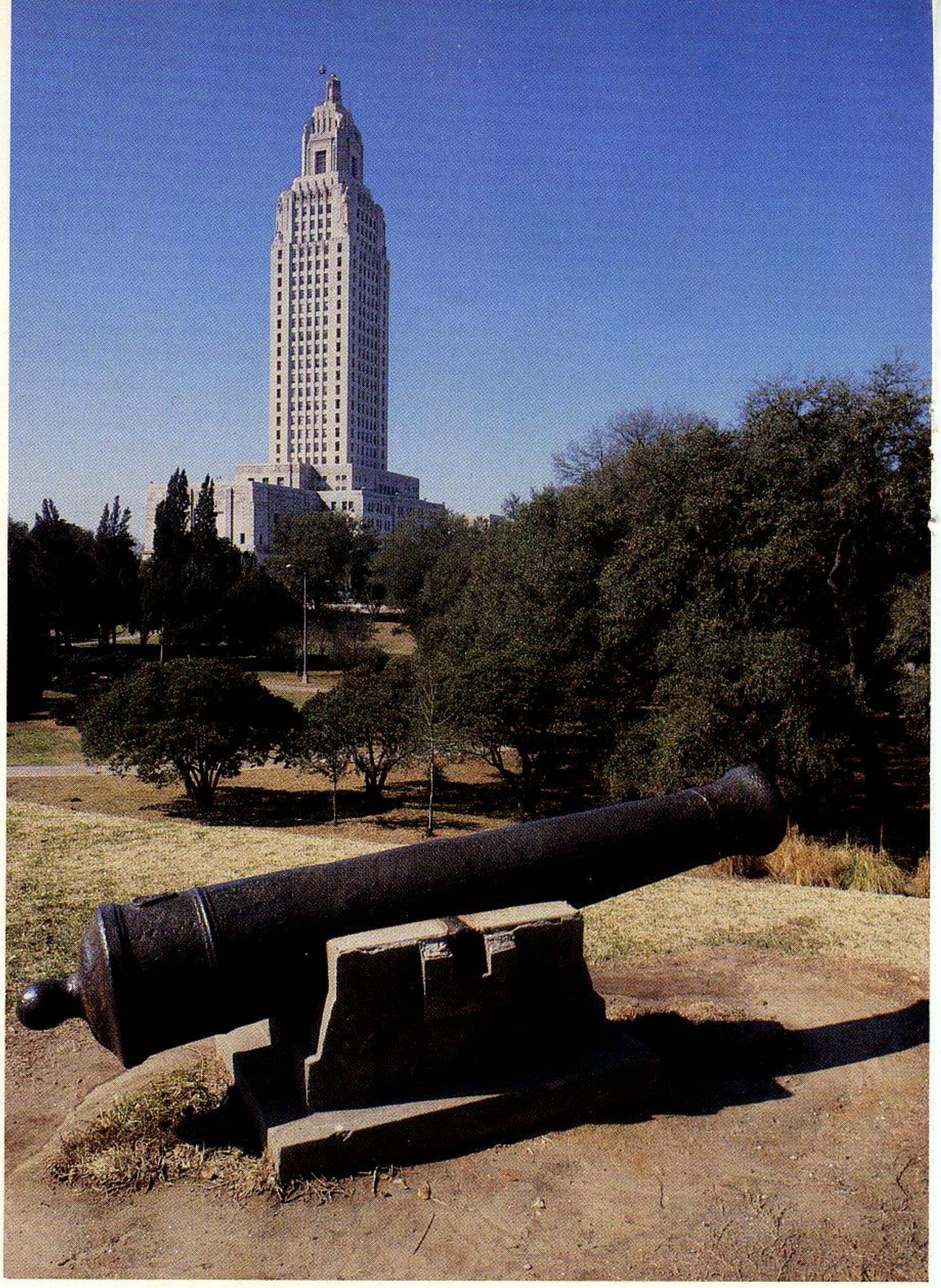
Beutner, an 18-year-old who plans to major in aeronautical engineering at Purdue University, developed a new airfoil design. He began working on the project about four years earlier, when he started developing different airfoil and wing designs in a wind tunnel and water channel. He followed that with experiments with remote-piloted vehicles — a radio-controlled glider and a radio-controlled helicopter.

Schneider's project involved a proposal to attack forest pests, such as the spruce budworm and gypsy moths, with bacteria. Although the concept was not entirely new, Schneider did have a new twist. Since the disadvantage of the method is that the bacteria normally live only five days, he proposed a method of making the bacteria live long enough to spore in the pest's gut. "It would make a slightly less effective bacterium, but it wouldn't be as expensive as frequent spraying," Draper noted.

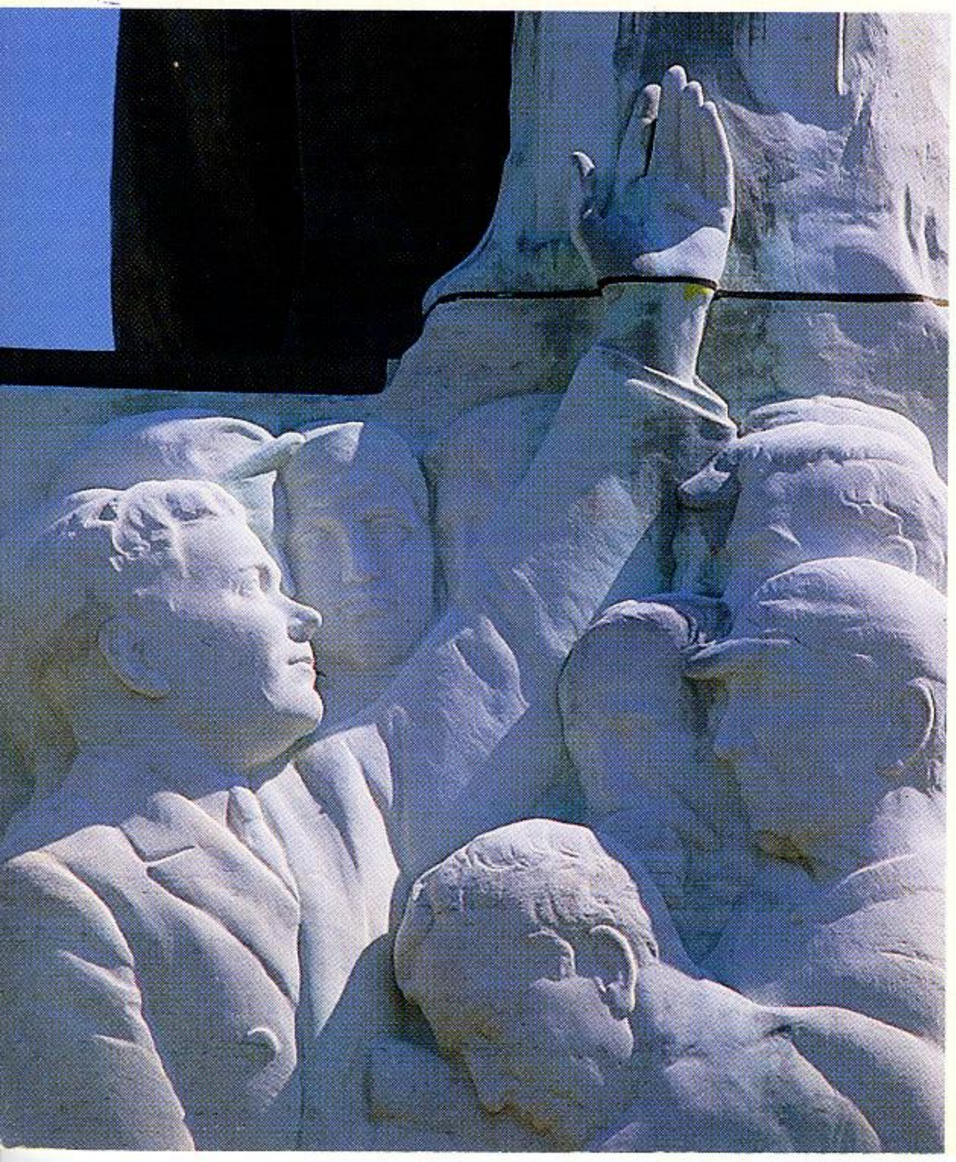
Draper found the youths to be "clearly, clearly exceptional kids. Their range was enormous. Some were real engineering types. Some were more like research scientists."

And all 10 of the scholars who came to Beaumont were "poised and articulate young people," Draper added.□





Louisiana State Capitol



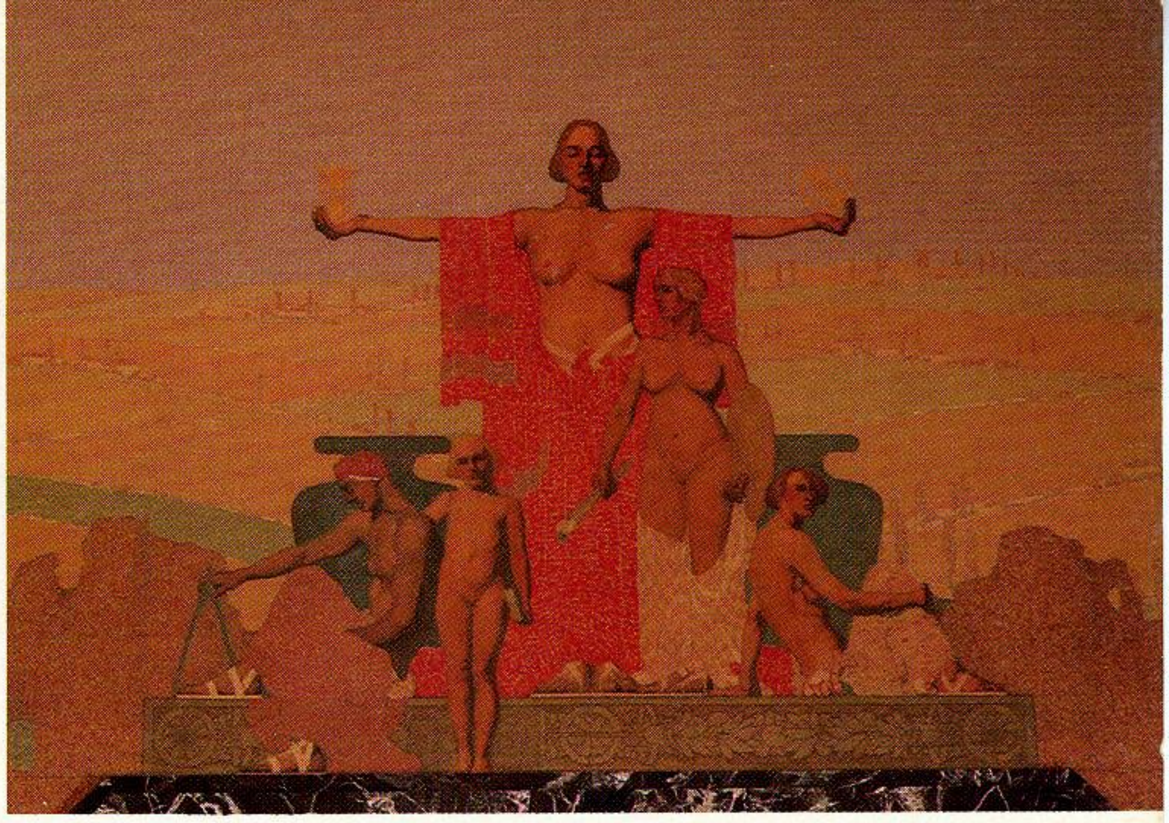
A statue of Huey Pierce Long, the Kingfish of Louisiana politics, maintains a stony, silent vigil before his gravesite in the formal gardens of the State Capitol grounds.

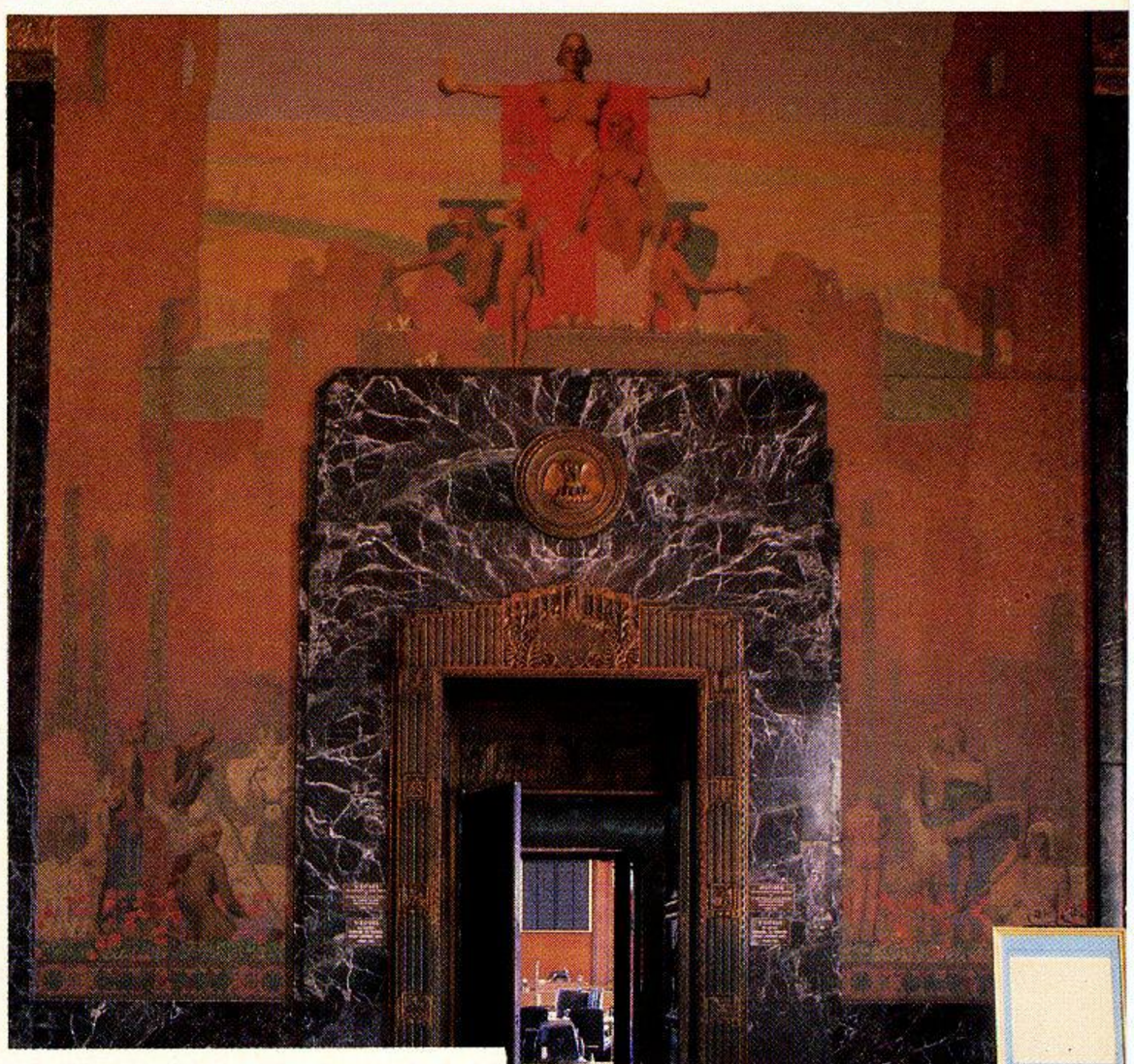
It's appropriate. After all, the building of the 34-story structure was yet another of Long's grand designs.

In many ways, the paradoxical Long had shoved his home state into the 20th Century, and his new capitol building symbolized his effort. Construction of the structure was completed in January 1932, coinciding with Longs first month in the U.S. Senate.

Even though the statehouse quickly outgrew its original purpose — to house all state offices under a single roof — the building remains a National Historic Landmark, a designation granted by the U.S. Department of the Interior in June 1978. It also continues to serve as the state's legislative and executive office building.

The tower measures 450 feet from base to peak, featuring a smooth, unembellished spire up to the 21st floor. Between the 21st and 26th floors, an ornamental area provides a strong contrast to the unadorned lower section. Above the 26th floor, the Capitol is





Observes 50th Birthday

again the picture of smooth, clean lines.

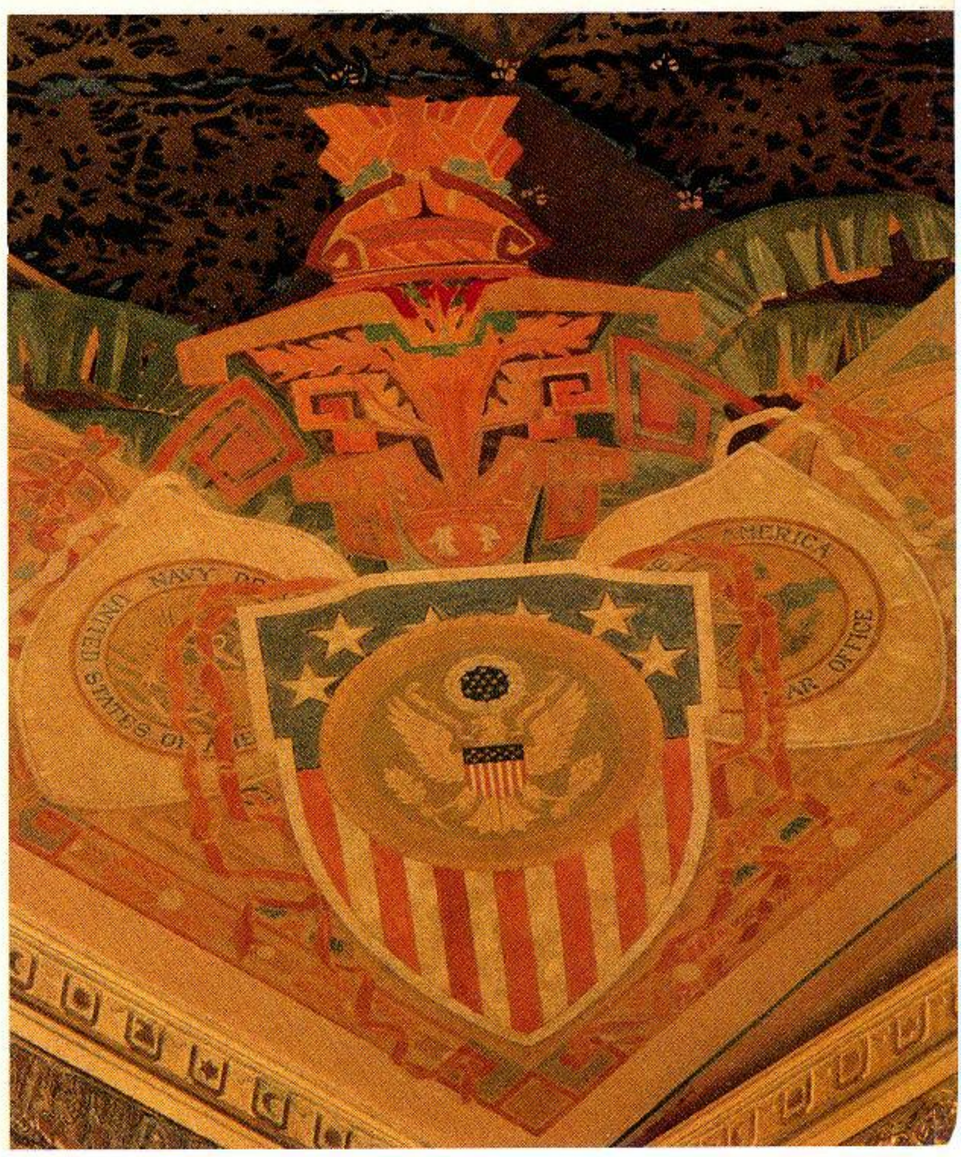
Rededication ceremonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Louisiana State Capitol's completion coincided with the April 19 opening session of the 1982 legislative session.

The weekend before, a Mini Arts Festival was planned for the Capitol grounds, along with a reception for state dignitaries, hosted by Gov. David Treen.

An exhibit of memorabilia associated with the construction project — including artists' original renditions of the planned building — was scheduled to remain on display through May 29 in the basement of the Capitol. The exhibit is open to the public.

In addition, the State Archives commissioned an oral history consisting of interviews with surviving workers and artisans who were connected with the construction project. Both the oral history presentation and a video presentation on the Depression-era construction project are available for borrowing through the Louisiana State Library. □

Photos by Timothy Van Riper



Feasting in the Field

by Sue Wheatley

Staghorn sumac

Editor's Note: Since an amateur could easily mistake a poisonous plant for one that is edible, appropriate warnings are included.

Dianne Seigfried is answering questions, a task the wholesome-looking blonde performs every workday.

"What is a brown bird with white on it?" asks a woman from New York.

"Are the hoary azaleas blooming yet?" a man with a camera wonders out loud.

"Where do I turn?" queries another man as he unfolds a map.

When all the questions are answered, Dianne sits on a corner of her desk to explain how a Wheaton, Illinois, girl became a ranger at Big Thicket National Preserve near Kountze, Texas.

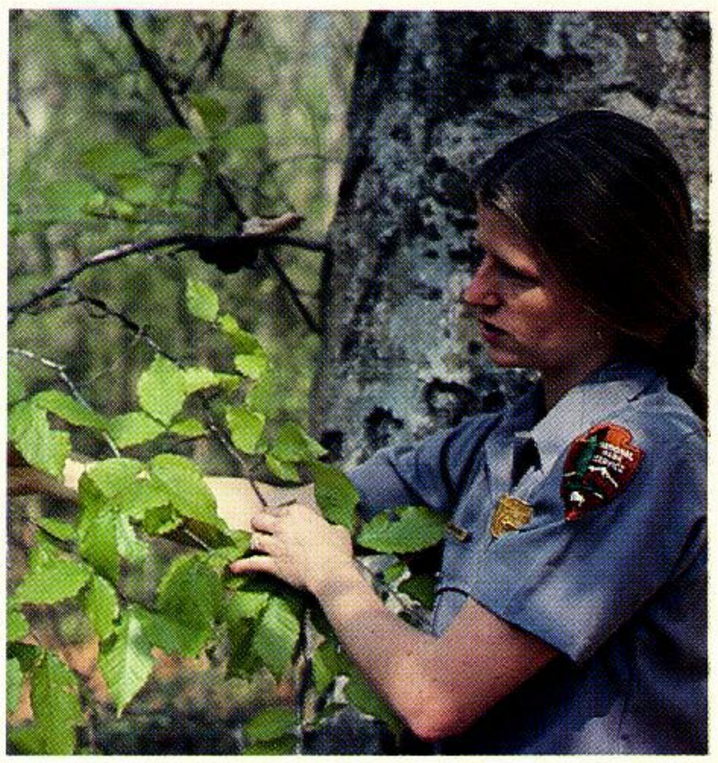
"When I was growing up in Wheaton," Dianne recalls, "I saw all my fields turning into apartment complexes." That fact bothered her, but, she reveals, "When I went to college, I started working on my elementary education degree. The classes were okay, but student teaching made me feel cooped up."

Dianne remembered her feelings about those apartments and realized she wanted to teach people to appreciate and protect the outdoors. She changed her major at Illinois State University to conservation, a program offered by the university's Parks and Recreation Department, and after graduation hired on with the Young Adult Conservation Corps, a federal program. From there, she moved on to work at Rocky Mountain National Park and Olympic National Park.

While Dianne was in Colorado, she met and became engaged to Mike Robinett, who is from Clear Lake City, Texas. Mike suggested that she apply for a ranger's post in the Big Thicket. She applied, and now her office is a log cabin filled with pamphlets on birds, insects, bushes and trees — and five people with more questions.

Dianne has made the transition from the Midwest to southeast Texas with ease. Now she identifies edible plants the visitors see as they walk along the trails. She stoops down and brushes dead leaves off the tiny fiddle heads of a cinnamon fern.

"You can eat the leaves of this fern when they are curled like this, but don't eat a mature leaf,"



Beech leaves may be eaten raw, but when they're crushed and boiled with granulated bark they are said to be an appetite stimulant.

she cautions.

Then she stretches up to pull down the branch of a beech tree. "You can eat these beech leaves, too," she notes.

But that is just the beginning as she moves down the trail, pointing left and right like a shopper in a grocery store.

Another example of an edible plant found in the Big Thicket and throughout southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana is the roadside cattail *(Typha latifolia, T. domingensis).* Every part of the roadside cattail can be eaten raw, boiled, fried or roasted for a different flavor. The cattail also has an advantage not all edible plants share — it is not easily confused with poisonous look-alikes. The plant is plentiful, easy to prepare, tasty and available year-round.

Ranger Dianne Seigfried examines the new growth on an elderberry.

The cattail grows in the wet marshes, roadside ditches and almost any place that is soggy a good part of the year. The roots are edible the entire year. They can be pulled or dug up, washed thoroughly and eaten raw, although most who try them prefer to roast them as they would an Idaho potato. The roots can also be washed, peeled, crushed or pounded and then added to commercial flour to make a slightly rough-textured bread. In fact, the pollen that grows on the top of the cattail in a spike above the familiar sausage-like part of the cattail can be added to flour, too. To gather the pollen, shake the spike over an open plastic bag. Pollen flour is most often used in pancake batter, a tablespoon or so for each batch of pancakes.

In the spring, the cattail sends up new growth. When the new shoots are about two feet tall, they can be pulled up and peeled until the white core is exposed. About six inches long, the white core can be washed, salted and eaten for a taste similar to tender, young celery. Later on in the year, when the green flower spike of unopened flowers appears, both the top, skinny, male flower spike and the lower, sausage-shaped, female flower can be cut off, boiled and eaten in a manner similar to corn on the cob.

Another edible plant that grows in marshes or at the edges of ponds and reservoirs is the common bulrush *(Scirpus actus, S. olneyi, S. robustus).* This sedge grows from three to 10 feet tall and can be eaten throughout the year. The roots can be eaten raw, cooked as a vegetable or dried and crushed to be added to flour. New shoots can be eaten raw or cooked, while the white stem base can be added to a green salad.

The flavor of elderberries *(Sambucus canadensis)* lives on in stories of elderberry wine and elderberry pies concocted by grandparents. Elderberries, which are found in the marshes and other low-lying areas of Texas and Louisiana, are easiest to identify in late spring, when their large bunches of small white flowers cluster in groups on round-headed shrubs. Stands of elderberry bushes often form dense thickets.

But warnings are necessary when dealing with elderberries. The stems and twigs are poisonous and should never be used in either wines or pies. Even the berries are not completely safe since they can make one ill if they are not fully ripe. To be completely sure, wait until after the berries have been through a frost and have turned a deep blue-black. The first frost will cause the enzymes in the berries to eliminate the berries' toxicity as well as improve their taste. Any recipe that calls for blackberries will work for elderberries, but most pie-filling recipes recommend increasing the sugar by one-half and adding extra lemon juice.

Still another marsh and lowland inhabitant provides a tea to be added to a cattail, bulrush and elderberry meal. This is the sumac

The cattail, an abundant, hardy plant growing wild throughout the Gulf Coast area, is almost totally edible.

(Rhus glabra) with its red spike of fuzzy berries. These dark red berries can be picked, washed, crushed and drained. With a little water, sugar and cinnamon, they make a delicious hot drink in the fall. Poison sumac *(Rhus vernix)* can be easily distinguished from its non-poisonous relative because the poison variety has white berries that droop downward.

If four common names for the cat briar confuses would-be foragers, think what a problem the settlers had when different cultures began naming the New-World's *Sagittaria latifolia.* The English called it arrowhead, arrowleaf and water potato. The Dutch settlers called it duck potato and swan

Animals and people compete for the Southern dewberry, a hardy fruit-bearing plant found throughout the region.

potato. The Indians of one tribe called it katniss. The other Indian tribes called it wapao, wapato and wapatoo. Luckily for all, its distinctive appearance smoothed the language barriers. *Sagittaria's* leaf looks exactly as one of its English names implies — arrowhead. The arrow-shaped leaves stick up prominently in fresh water marshes, sluggish rivers and ponds. The leaves are erect on tall stems that can be as high as four feet. The arrow tips usually point upward. The flowers are three-petaled and white, and they jut up on their own stalks.

To find the starchy roots, the settlers and Indians felt in the mud with their toes until they dislodged the rather fat, short tubers of this plant. (Generally, the tubers are buried two to three feet away from the place where the stalks protrude up toward the surface.) When the bulbs floated to the surface the settlers simply picked them up, rinsed them and boiled them. Evidently the Indians ate them raw, but modern palates prefer baking them like Idaho potatoes. Arrowhead tubers are especially good in cold potato salads, but do not cook them too long because they quickly become mushy.

If sliding your toes through the mud feeling for arrowhead roots sounds like too much work for back-to-nature eating, try a walk through the woods and marshes, picking leaves, barks and flowers to be made into tea at home. You can have a wide variety of different teas with only a very short hike.

Basswood flowers *(Tilia floridana)* can be steeped in hot water for a pungent aromatic tea. The young twigs of the birch *(Betula nigra)* will give you a nutty flavor, while young birch leaves taste more like mint. Birch bark has still a third taste, but this may be a little too acidic to enjoy. The slippery elm bark *(Ulmus rubra)* has an inner bark that has a slightly salty taste.

Common goldenrod *(Solidago odora)* leaves can be dried and used to brew tea too. All of the clovers make sweet teas, but clover tea should be made from dry flowers that have been dried still further. A week in the pantry or an hour in a low-temperature oven is a good guess.

The viney cat brier weaves its way across the forest floor.

Other small roadside flowers — the lemon beebalm *(Monarda citriodora)*, horsemint *(M. punctata)* and bergamot *(M. fistulosa)* — are all members of the mint family and make fine leaf teas, but they can be very strong. A few leaves added to a regular tea bag seems to be the best combination. In fact, this is probably how our forebears stretched their expensive English teas. In time the name Oswego Tea was given to all teas made by combining these native leaves with the English version. Remember to wash your newly-picked leaves before you begin to dry them. If you don't, you may end up with dried insects floating in your cup.

No discussion of edible plants can omit hawthorns and cockspurs. Hawthorns *(Crataegus opaca)* are the small, bush trees with the woody thorns. No other North American bush has thorns, so identification is simple. In the fall and through the winter, these small bushes bear dark purple or black berries. Wild animals quickly learn that the berries do not fall during the winter, and birds and squirrels visit the bushes all winter for a sure supply of food.

Hawthorn berries can be simmered in boiling water until they form a fleshy pulp, which can then be squeezed in a jelly bag and treated like any other slightly acidic berry. Extra sugar added to any berry recipe will turn hawthorn berries into delicious jellies.

Cockspurs belong to the hawthorn family and are one of about 1,300 species of hawthorns known by such names as mayhaws, red haws, scarlet haws, thorn plums, thorn apples and just plain haws. All are edible and especially suited for jellies.

The common persimmon *(Diospyros virginiana)* is good for jelly, too. Rather than plucking persimmons from the tree, it is easier to wait until the first frost, put a sheet beneath the tree and shake off the ripe persimmons. Once these have been boiled and made into a pulp, you can decide whether to make jelly or experiment with using them in wine, beer, bread, pudding or custard recipes.

The pawpaw *(Asimina triloba)* is sometimes called a custard apple or the false banana tree because the color, shape and flavor of its small fruit resemble bananas. The

The fiddle heads of the bracken and cinnamon fern can be cooked like asparagus when they are small.

Although the arrowwood's purple berries are edible, correct identification is a must since some toxic berries are similar in appearance.

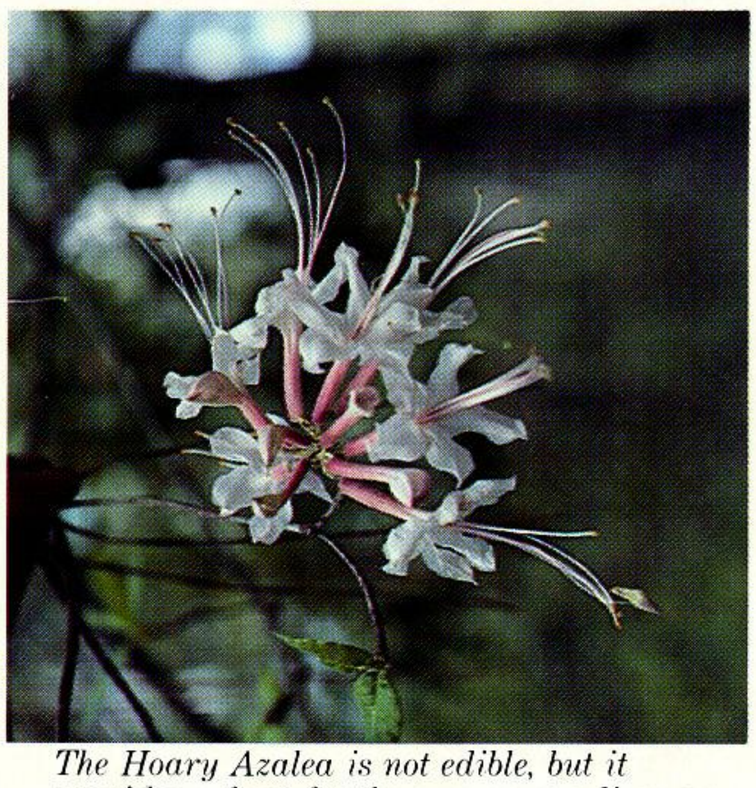
flowers can be dark green early in the year, then slowly change to a red-brown autumn appearance. There are two sets of three petals each, one set inside the other. This petal arrangement is quite unlike that of any other tree. The yellow fruit can be picked early and placed in a dark, dry place to ripen, or it can be picked later in the year when it starts to turn brown. Unfortunately, insects will sample the fruit first if you wait too long. The fruit is best in pawpaw custard once the large seeds have been removed. Mix eggs, milk and sugar for a basic custard, then fold in the pulp. After chilling, pawpaw custard is delicious served with a whipped cream topping.

The dewberry *(Rubus trivialis)* belongs to the blackberry family. Most berries of this family are high in vitamin C, and the dewberry is also high in vitamin A. Dewberry leaves can be made into a tea, but the berries are truly worth savoring.

The service berry *(Amelanchier)* is native throughout the area and grows well up into Arkansas and Mississippi. Sometimes called the June berry, shadbush, saskatoon, sugar pear or even Indian pear, this little blue-black berry is not very good when eaten raw, but closely resembles the flavor of a sugared pear once it is cooked.

Sassafras tea is one drink mentioned in almost every pioneering and propecting book ever written. The Boy Scouts of America include it in their camping lists. Health food advertisements often include sassafras tea as a basic. No matter how many people dig up the roots, the hardy little tree seems to be as plentiful as it always was.

The sassafras tree is small with tell-tale, mitten-shaped leaves appearing on the same twigs that carry both oval and three-lobed leaves, too. The best way to make a small amount of tea is to dig up some small young roots, wash them, pick off any rootlets and then boil the roots until you like the taste — usually when the tea becomes a rich red color. The roots can be boiled repeatedly for subsequent batches of tea, but one should drink only moderate amounts of sassafras tea since some people are sensitive to its very mild narcotic effect.
sassafras root, too, but unless you have a lot of time and patience, it is easier to buy root beer than to work and work, only to discover that you have created a gooey, smelly mess instead of the clear, rich-tasting drink you expected.



The Hoary Azalea is not edible, but it provides a feast for the eyes as one dines on other plants.

Many of the spices found in bottles in the supermarket are also found along the superhighways, where they are often unrecognized. Fennel, a feathery, tall weed with pale, green-gray stalks, is used in pickles, sausages, fish soups and sauces. The seeds are used whole or ground and have a sweet flavor that resembles licorice.

The red bays of the Texas-Louisiana area are the same trees that provide the bay leaves found in recipes for meats and poultry. The bay leaves are also called laurel leaves in botany books.

Of course, the sassafras tree is the basis of file', the ingredient of much Louisiana cooking.

Even plants not known as spices can mimic those on the grocery shelf. Smartweed *(Polygonum)* is one of these. Its leaves taste remarkably similar to cayenne pepper and can be used in the same manner. The seeds themselves can be ground up and used as a seasoning similar to conventional black pepper.

It is difficult to remember that our pioneering forebears and the Indians of the area used plants or animals for every single thing they needed. Beyond a 50-mile radius from a port, the most basic items that Europe had to offer became prohibitively expensive. Besides using leaves and shoots for vegetables, salads and teas; besides substituting roots for potatoes and flour; besides utilizing trees for sugar and syrup; besides eating nuts, seeds and fruit, these people experimented constantly until they found plants that were salty, peppery or sweet. They found local substitutes for tobacco, coffee and even chocolate. They treated the barks and roots of inedible plants to transform them into cord, thread or rope. The pioneers created fishhooks, needles, toothbrushes and arrow tips from plants, when necessary. They discovered natural insecticides and wove sleeping mats from certain plants. They sometimes even stuffed quilts with plant down.

Dishes, pails, boats, sleds and skates came from bark. And when the absolute necessities were somewhat assured, such frontiersmen and women dyed their cotton and wool belongings with elderberries and bloodroots for reds; with mullein, nettles and birch trees for yellows; and with butternut and berries for purples and violets.

While today's man or woman probably does not care to go quite so far with such experimentation, identification and preparation of edible wild plants into appetizing dishes can be an enjoyable hobby.□

Sue Wheatley is a freelance writer based in Beaumont who enjoys nature.

Photos by Sharron Gulley

A New Look for Beaumont's Old Town

By Debi Derrick

The Green Beanery

Downtown Beaumont's skyline has undergone a metamorphosis with the construction of such facilities as the Civic Center/City Hall Complex, Southwestern Bell's offices and the newest addition to the horizon — Gulf States Utilities Co.'s Edison Plaza.

But just blocks away from downtown, another metamorphosis is occuring. It differs, however, in that these changes are from the inside out. As a result of the changes — mostly remodeling of existing structures — that part of Beaumont has become known as "Old Town."

At the turn of the century, the area was a virtual suburb of Beaumont — a housing addition where smaller porch- and lattice-trimmed homes nestled a street or two away from those such as the McFaddin mansion or the J. Cooke Wilson home, which now serves as the Beaumont Art Museum. Unfortunately, as Beaumont spread westward, much of the area bounded by First and 11th streets to the east and west and by Hazel and Laurel to the north and south became just another old residential district — past its prime and deteriorating rapidly much as those found in many other growing urban areas.

Hardly anyone expected the kind of change that has come about over the last eight years. The transformation began when Jimmy Tarleton and her husband Jim bought an older home at 2250 North and remodeled it to become the Ja-Lee Art Gallery with a framing shop and upstairs living quarters.

Since then, older homes throughout the area have almost magically been converted by enterprising, creative owners into shops featuring specialty items, antiques and gifts — and often providing living quarters for the owners as well.

Some of the homes have also been turned into restaurants boasting reputations among Beaumont's finest. The shops, which preserve the integrity and beauty of the homes and the neighborhood, have become an important commercial area of Beaumont while infusing new life into the neighborhood. Now shops offering everything from dancewear and books to handcrafted gift items lure shoppers and browsers alike to the oak-lined streets of Beaumont's Old Town.

Do-it-yourselfers can find yarns for knitting or weaving, as well as classes in both, at The Woolery. Or they can find arts and crafts supplies at Something Different and sign up for tole painting lessons while they're there. Someone in the market for cut flowers can visit Best of Friends, a shop operated by two best friends. The business also features pottery.

Someone looking for remodeling hints can try either the Fan Factory for a ceiling fan or T.A.S. Oriental Rugs Ltd. for an imported carpet. And someone in the market for unique or handcrafted jewelry can visit Creative Things or the Me'lange. A shopping trip can be rounded out with chicken fried steak at the Black-Eyed Pea or gumbo at All That Jazz. The shops and their offerings are almost as limitless and creative as the names given them.

To Old Town's founders, the Tarletons, it was a matter of economics that led them to establish their business in the area, a matter which affected many of the later

businesses. A building that could serve as both business and home was less costly than maintaining two separate locations.

"We had to have a home and shop in order to keep our overhead and expenses down so we could give better prices," Jim Tarleton explained. There are, however, other business advantages, he said. "Our business isn't a heavy traffic business. We have a repeat clientele and we know that if 10 or 12 customers come in during a day, they'll be paying customers.

"And here, there's not the hub and bub of shopping centers. People can browse and when they need service, we're at their elbow, ready to help out. We couldn't be anywhere else and do what we're doing.

Locating in the area was a natural for the business. They had an established clientele and the new location offered easier access from the interstate highway than did their former location on Park Street in Beaumont's south end.

To Jim Tarleton, what has happened to the area in the aftermath of that decision is more than just a residential district going commercial. It has been the creation of an atmosphere. "People need things to do. And when you create an atmosphere like in Old Town, they enjoy themselves more," he philosophized.

Perhaps one business that most exemplifies the changes and the atmosphere in Old Town is the Green Beanery at 2121 McFaddin. The former old home features a restaurant on the ground floor with gift shops attached outside and on the second floor above the restaurant. It was begun five years ago by Ann Ethridge, lifelong resident of the area, and Glenn Watz, who was at the time working for Texas Instruments in Houston. It was Ethridge, along with Bobby Blake, an Old Town antiques dealer, who later began promoting the area and coined the term Old Town.

When the Green Beanery came into being, Ethridge and Watz had the "same thing in mind," Ethridge said. "He wanted a restaurant and I wanted a shop. The rest kind of developed by demand."

Originally, Ethridge's "shop" was part and parcel of the restaurant with her antiques used as decor. And like most of the area's shops, careful attention was paid to the name — not just anything would do.

"We were having to get in the phone book and were trying desparately to get a name," Ethridge said. "The place was supposed to have lots of greenery and so Jerry Klein of the Fair Store sent a list of suggestions, one of which was Green Beanery."

A year later, Ethridge's part of the business separated from the restaurant when she acquired an old field house from Beaumont-Charlton Pollard High School. It was moved next to the Green Beanery, attached with a deck and then converted to her gift shop, which offers unique gift items and small antiques.

Currently Watz owns all of the facilities and leases the shop area.

The Grean Beanery, restaurant and all, isn't lacking in the atmosphere that's made Old Town famous. Naturally, the buildings are painted green. And the shops, although small, are pleasantly so and packed with all sizes of interesting gadgets, gifts and goodies. The restaurant, besides being known for its quiches and crepes, is also known for its eclectic decor. Tables of various shapes and sizes and ages grace the hardwood floors while squares of well-washed material grace the tables as cloths and napkins.

Silverware also represents a variety of types, styles and ages, and a patron can occasionally spot an ashtray or two stamped with the name of the now-defunct Hotel Beaumont. And, of course, there is always greenery around.

With shops of all sorts springing up after the Ja-Lee Art Gallery and the Green Beanery, a sort of coalition was the natural next step for shopkeepers in Old Town. Bobby Blake and Ethridge assembled a brochure on the area's many antique stores, with Blake calling it the Old Town Antique District. That was four years ago. An Old Town shopping guide has since been developed by the two and tours of the area are offered for visitors. The shopping guide lists 60 businesses, but Ethridge estimates that there are at least a couple of hundred businesses in the area.

Old Town merchants have done more, however, than simply band together for shopping guides and tours. They have also pooled their efforts to sponsor events featuring the area. The two most popular are the Spring and Fall Old Town Bashes when merchants bring their goods together for an outdoor weekend market. The bashes began as a Beanery Bash sponsored by Ethridge, but grew to include all who would participate.

In addition, an Old Town Association has been formed to give direction to the area as a whole. The association represents homeowners as well as businesses in the district. James Brennan, president, said, "Merchants are few in number compared to homeowners in the area. Merchants are just more outspoken." Brennan, a Lamar University professor, lives in Old Town, but does not operate a business there. One of the first projects encouraged by the association was a neighborhood watch which became not only Beaumont's first, but also one of its most successful such programs.

The changes in the area have been generally welcomed even by those who don't have commercial interests in their property. The neighborhood is coming back to life and that's good for everybody.

The area serves as one of Beaumont's most fascinating shopping centers and a prime example of what people can do to revive an older, once-deteriorating neighborhood. □

Debi Derrick is a freelance writer based in Beaumont who is also employed by the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce.

A Kaleidoscope Weekend in Old Town

For two days each spring the normally sedate, tree-shaded grounds of the Beaumont Art Museum become an outrageous bazaar of sights, sounds, tastes and smells known as Kaleidoscope. And Kaleidoscope '82 is expected to be the largest and most colorful one in the festival's eight-year history.

More than 30,000 visitors are expected to browse among the works displayed by 72 nationally-recognized artists and craftsmen, according to Yancy Fleming, general chairman for the event. "Competition was especially keen this year," she said, pointing out that 420 artists from throughout the United States had been judged for acceptance.

"We cover every medium," she added. "We try to select the best of everything offered."

Paintings, graphics, sculptures, pottery, etched, leaded and blown glass, as well as leatherwork, woodwork and weaving are some of the skills on display. Each artist contributes an item of his work to be auctioned during the festival, with proceeds going to the museum.

Something new will be added this year in the art area with the beginning of an amateur photography contest and display. Adults and youngsters 14 to 18 will compete for $1000 in cash awards and gift certificates. The color and black and white photos depicting nature subjects and children will be on display throughout the festival.

There will also be a new addition in the food department — hamburgers. Ethnic foods of every description are the main fare. Vietnamese and Cambodian, Syrian and Greek foods, with Mexican dishes and Texas barbecue added for spice, fill the air with savory odors. This will be the first time hamburgers will join other all-American munchies including hot dogs, po-boys, corn-on-the-cob and snow-cones.

Continuous live entertainment ranging from the Civic Ballet and Lamar University's Brass Quintet to country and western groups and folktales for the kids will be presented on a stage especially constructed for the festival.

"Kid's Kaleidoscope is a favorite," Mrs. Fleming smiled. "There are always creative things that the children can do, whether they are 2-years-old or 12."

A clothesline art contest from Beaumont's elementary schools will be on display, and youngsters will have an opportunity to try their artistic skills at easel painting, shell jewelry making, thumbprint art, cookie decoration and print making. They can also have their faces painted to blend in with the colorful surroundings by one of Kaleidoscope's 1,300 volunteer workers.

Everywhere you turn during Kaleidoscope weekend, you'll find a unique opportunity for robust family fun. □

— Henry Joyner

Just The Facts

Kaleidoscope will be held May 9 and 10. Gates will be open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and from noon until 7 p.m. Sunday.

The Beaumont Art Museum is located at 1111 Ninth street in Beaumont's Old Town section, but there is no parking available in the street surrounding the museum. Free parking is provided at Fair Park (Gulf Exit off I-10) with free air-conditioned buses continuously available to take festival-goers to and from the grounds.

Adult tickets are $2 at the gate. Kindergarten through fifth grade students who attend certain schools receive free tickets, but admission for children without tickets is $1.

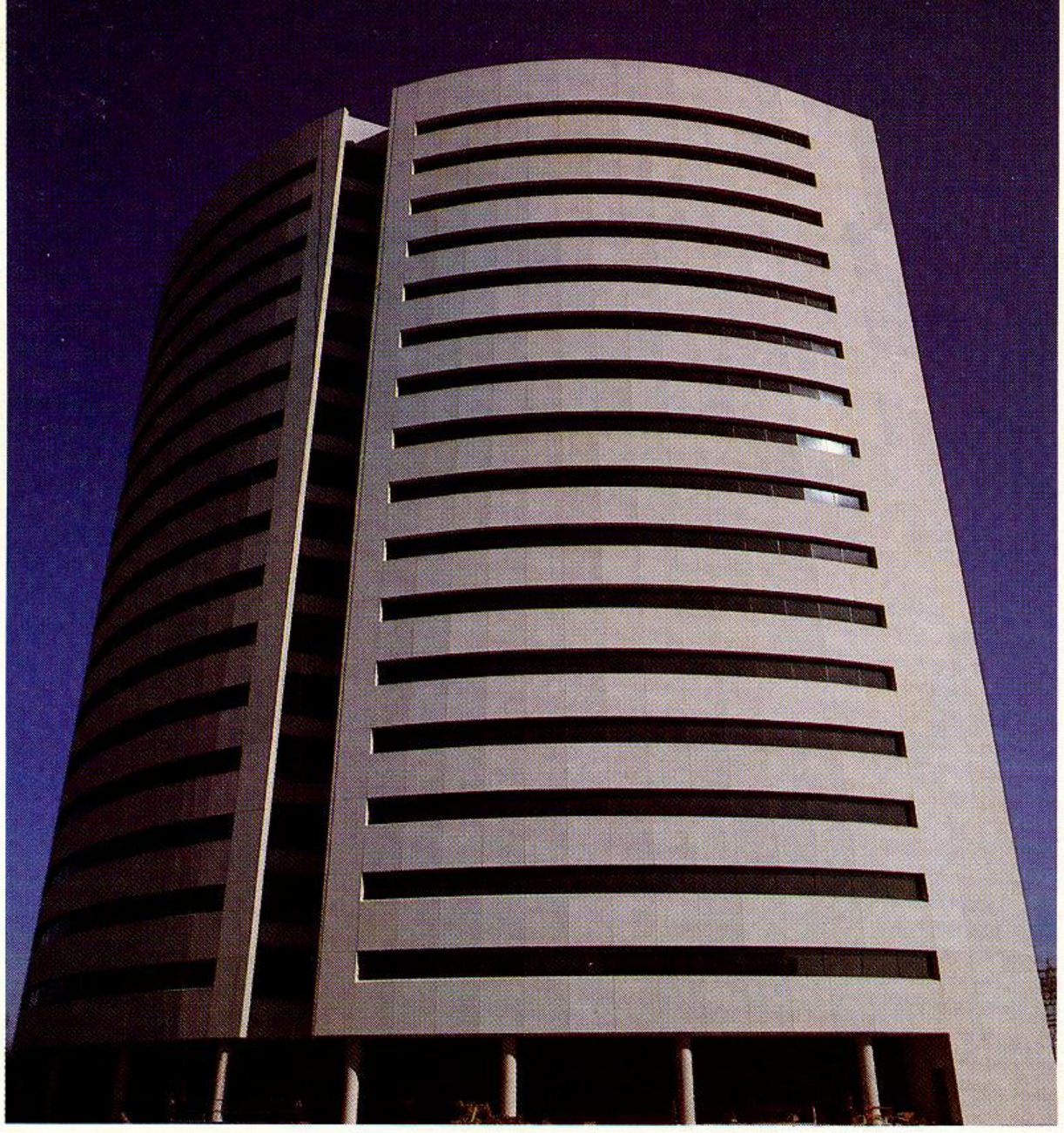


Photo by Don K. Langson

Edison Plaza — GSU's Model of Efficiency

by Sharon Englade

Edison Plaza, thy name is efficiency.

From the curved quadrant design of the building, to the set-back solar gray glass windows, to the utilization of floor space, the new corporate headquarters of Gulf States Utilities on the banks of the Neches River in downtown Beaumont was conceived, designed and built to provide both job efficiency and energy efficiency.

In addition, the stark white 17-story building is an aesthetically pleasing contribution to the city's skyline, presenting a striking picture to westbound travelers entering Beaumont on the Interstate, especially in the late afternoon with the structure reflecting in the waters of the river.

As Jack Worthy, GSU vice president of general services, has said on many occasions, his primary responsibility for the past several years has been the new building — getting it off the drawing boards and into reality and then relocating most of the downtown employees under the one roof instead of five. Part of his job was to determine the placement of the various departments so that those that needed contact with another were located in close proximity within the new building.

Because of the building's design, which can be likened to a 17-story baseball diamond, 85 percent of the interior is usable office or work space. Hallways, elevators, stairwells and restrooms comprise the remainder. "Compare this with the 60 percent usable space in most office buildings, and you see how efficient the design is," said Worthy. The key, he noted, is the "open office" concept which employs soundproofed cloth panels, or dividers, to create three-sided work areas for the majority of Gulf States employees. Most of the "traditional" offices in Edison Plaza — those with walls and doors — are located along the two straight sides of the building, with the curved side facing into the city left unencumbered to preserve the feeling of open space.

The use of the 65-inch-high panels instead of permanent walls provides the flexibility to allow department contours to change to meet the demands of business, Worthy said. Studies have shown that changes in offices occur on the average of once every five years, he said, and, in a traditional office building, this means tearing down walls, replacing ceiling tiles and carpeting, relocating electric outlets, lighting and phone jacks and, sometimes, the heating and air conditioning duct work.

Edison Plaza will have to go through none of this turmoil — and expense. The company official estimated it would cost somewhere between $3 and $7 a square foot to rearrange an "open" office, compared with between $35 and $40 per square foot in the usual office building.

All floors except the lobby are carpeted with 18-by-18-inch squares laid over 24-by-24-inch metal panels which are affixed to pedestals six inches above the concrete floors — access flooring. In this cavity go the cables for com-

This view shows how office space is utilized on one floor of the Plaza.

puters, telephones and electricity, terminating at power panels that can be easily moved by rearranging the metal and carpet squares.

Cool fluorescent lighting is inset in the ceiling, and each desk is equipped with a "task" light which has both a fluorescent and an incandescent bulb.

Worthy noted that studies have shown the open office environment, when used properly, increases productivity as much as 10 percent which has a positive impact on employment rolls.

On the energy conservation side of the ledger, Edison Plaza is designed to use about 66,000 BTUs per square foot annually, compared with between 90,000 and 120,000 BTUs a square foot in the traditional office building erected before the days of energy conservation consciousness.

"This translates into a savings of enough energy to operate 150 typical all-electric homes," explained Worthy.

The heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting of the Plaza is activated, operated and controlled by a computer located in the first floor security room. "This computer is the brain that runs the central plant, all the systems needed to sustain the building's functions," commented Gerald Condon, coordinator of space management for GSU.

This "magic timer" can be preprogrammed to turn on the lights in the morning before employees arrive and "condition" the interior atmosphere, either for warmth or cooling — all without a crew on duty to manually perform these tasks, he said.

Lights are automatically turned off after working hours in a timed sequence that allows cleaning crews to complete their work, but employees who need to work at night can make arrangements to have the lights in their area only activated, instead of having to light up the entire floor, Condon noted.

The building's mechanical systems are housed in a central plant located in the adjacent company garage. The tubing, pipes and wires for the cooling system, sprinklers and electrical wiring run from the central plant to the mechanical rooms on each floor via a walkway that connects the garage with the second floor of the Plaza, Condon said.

Chilled water provides the air conditioning and electric resistance heating will be needed only an average of five days a year, and then only for a few hours to take the chill out of the air, Worthy said. He explained that the remainder of the time, lights, office machines and body heat will provide temperature comfort.

A sophisticated variable air volume system uses sensing devices throughout the building to inform the computer what zones need to be cooler or warmer, he said.

The security and life safety systems are tied in with the computer, a Honeywell Delta 1000. Once an alarm is sounded anywhere in the building, audible and visible signals, as well as a computer printout noting the location, time and cause of the incident, are activated in the security room.

Other energy-saving aspects of Edison Plaza include fluorescent lighting that uses a "power budget" of only 1.85 watts, compared with between 3 and 3.5 watts in the average office building.

"The use of glass in Edison Plaza — less than in most buildings — is very important to our energy-saving efforts," said Worthy, pointing out the type of windows used in the building permits the entry of natural light but protects workers from "potential energy penalties" — the sun's heat and glare.

The tremendous task of moving employees from the former headquarters building, the Old Edson Hotel, and the Goodhue, Wilson, McFaddin and Petroleum buildings began the evening of Dec. 11, 1981, just two days less than two years after groundbreaking ceremonies were held. The move was completed in late March when company executives were moved onto the 17th floor.

Joe DeJean, director of Edison Plaza programs, was the man tapped to choreograph the move, a job that took a little over three months to accomplish, but more

A Gulf States employee demonstrates how the access flooring can expedite rearrangement of office space.

than a year to plan.

One of the keys to the move, he said, was a color coding system for office furnishings that would be moved to the new building. A few days before a scheduled move, files, furniture and boxes got their coded labels and, the night of the move, the contract movers loaded the goods onto dollies. Large vans trucked the furniture and possessions to the new building where they were deposited in the appropriate work locations.

As a general rule, it took two days to move into one floor of Edison Plaza, although six floors were filled in nine days during the first major move, DeJean said.

The move was "fast-track," which meant as one floor was being occupied, the building contractors were on the next setting up panels, laying carpet and putting in the finishing touches, he said.

"There were some pretty big pieces that had to be moved," commented Worthy, "and no one was injured, there was no significant damage done and very, very little disruption to the work force.

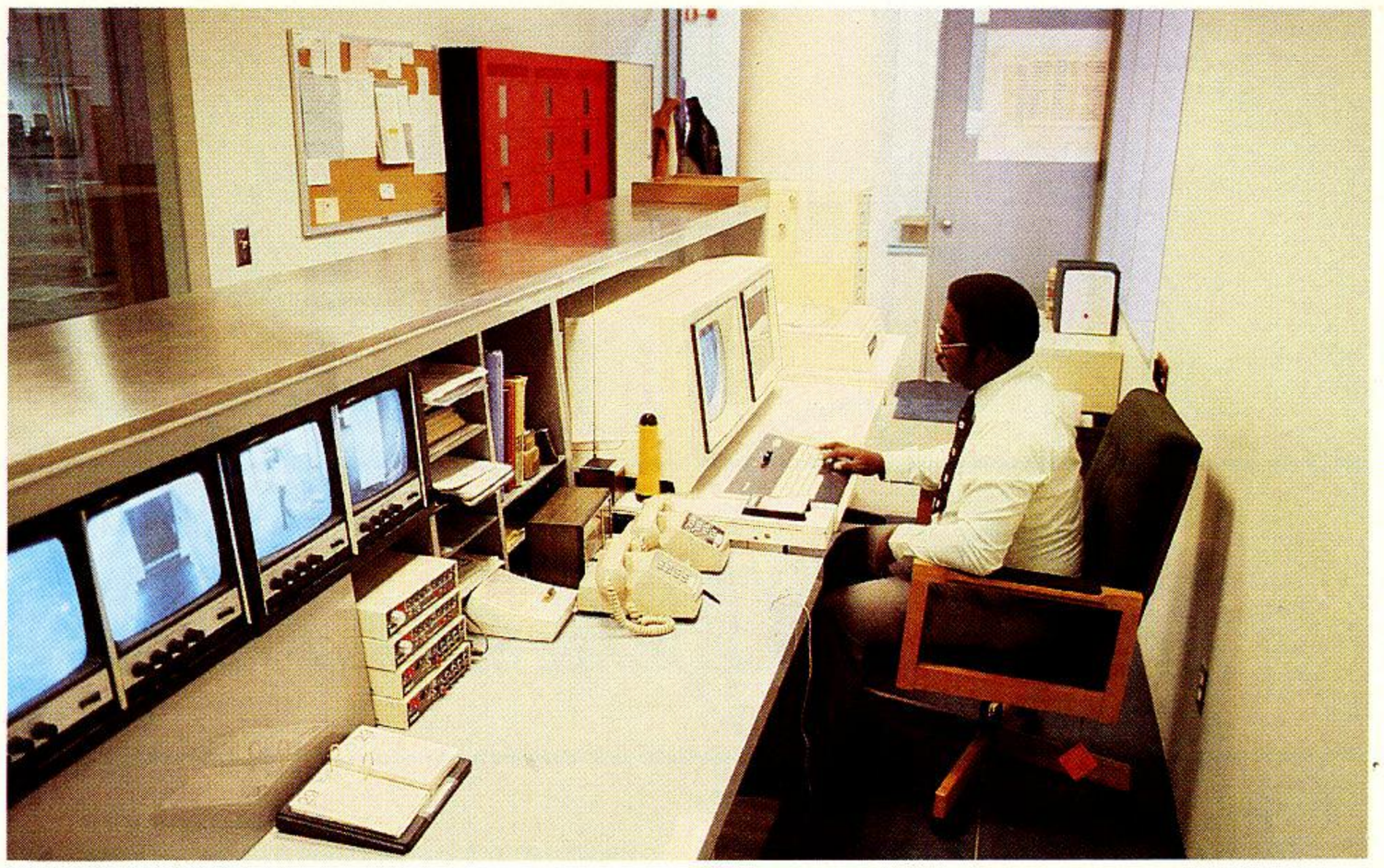
"What counted was the planning behind this move. These things don't just happen, anymore than building a power plant just happens. Someone had to do a lot of planning," the vice president said, throwing bouquets in DeJean's direction.

"I'm very proud there were no accidents; that we got to the church on time; that nothing was lost and there was no significant damage whatsoever," responded DeJean.

"Yes, I think the whole thing went rather well, everything considered. But, my dear, I don't want to hear the work 'move' for another lifetime," he said with a kidding-on-the-square chuckle.

Worthy acknowledged there were areas in the new building "that gave us headaches," specifically those floors where special provisions had to be made for heavy or specialized equipment.

Halon systems had to be installed on floors where expensive telephone and reproduction equipment and computers were destined. Worthy explained that halon is a gas that removes oxygen from the atmosphere in the event of fire, therefore smothering the flames. "When you've got expensive equipment, you might as well let it burn if you have to put out the fire with water. Water is just as destructive as fire in these circumstances," he said.



The computer in the first floor security room controls heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting.

A special ventilation system was installed to accommodate the blueprint machine which uses ammonia in processing, he said. If there were ever a big enough leak, he said, the fumes could be destructive to people and plants.

"We paid special attention to the air conditioning for the computers on 12," said Worthy, explaining that floor has four self-contained air conditioning units to preserve a stable environment for the sophisticated machines. Special hot water heaters with extra fast recovery were installed in areas where film and microfilm are processed, he added.

Moving some of the equipment and furniture required a high degree of ingenuity. For example, large pieces of furniture, such as oversized credenzas, were hung from the bottom of the freight elevator in order to haul them up to the appropriate floor.

The six-sectioned, 5-foot-by-28-foot elongated oval board room table reached the 17th floor through a six-foot hole cut in the wall of a restroom vestibule. The table and its three pedestals made the trip to the 16th floor on top of the elevator where workers on 17 retrieved and reassembled it.

Among the newest additions to Edison Plaza are the three flags that fly from 70-foot poles near the entrance to the building. Each of the flags — the United States, Texas and Louisiana pennants — are 12-feet-by-18 feet and were purchased from a Louisiana firm.

Thanks to the Boy Scouts of America and the Army Reserves, the three banners are displayed in their proper order. Since all three flag poles are the same height, the American flag must fly from the right standard as one looks at them from the building entrance. The flag representing native soil — in this case, Texas — is in the middle and the Louisiana flag on the left.

Still in the completion stage is the landscaping for the Plaza. As the word "plaza" implies, the area around the building will be a green oasis in the downtown area, complete with a fountain that follows the curved contour of the building to the west. On the east side of the building, benches are being placed in the concreted area that will be surrounded by greenery — trees, shrubs and ground cover.

"Every effort has been made to make Edison Plaza an efficient working place for our people," said Worthy, "but we were also concerned with making certain we work in pleasing and comfortable surroundings. Both were very important to us as we planned our new headquarters." □

Shunpiking

Contraband Days—

by Gus Cranow

According to Creole-Acadian legend, Jean Lafitte and his pirate band abandoned their one-time lair at Barataria Bay near New Orleans to flee westward from the long arm of the law.

After packing their loot aboard their longboats and pirogues, then pointing the vessels to the west, the escaping fleet took refuge at what is now Lake Charles. There, other legends say, Lafitte buried his contraband along the shores of "Charley's Lake."

True or not, the old legends persist to this day and now serve as inspiration and theme for a spring pageant unparalleled in the Bayou State.

Contraband Days is the name of the event that salutes the spirit, if not the illegal exploits, of celebrated corsair Jean Lafitte and his ragtag group of swashbuckling privateers. A special kind of event, it is unique even in a state famed for a multitude of colorful, exuberant festivals and an all-pervasive "laissez les bons temps rouler" (let the good times roll) mystique.

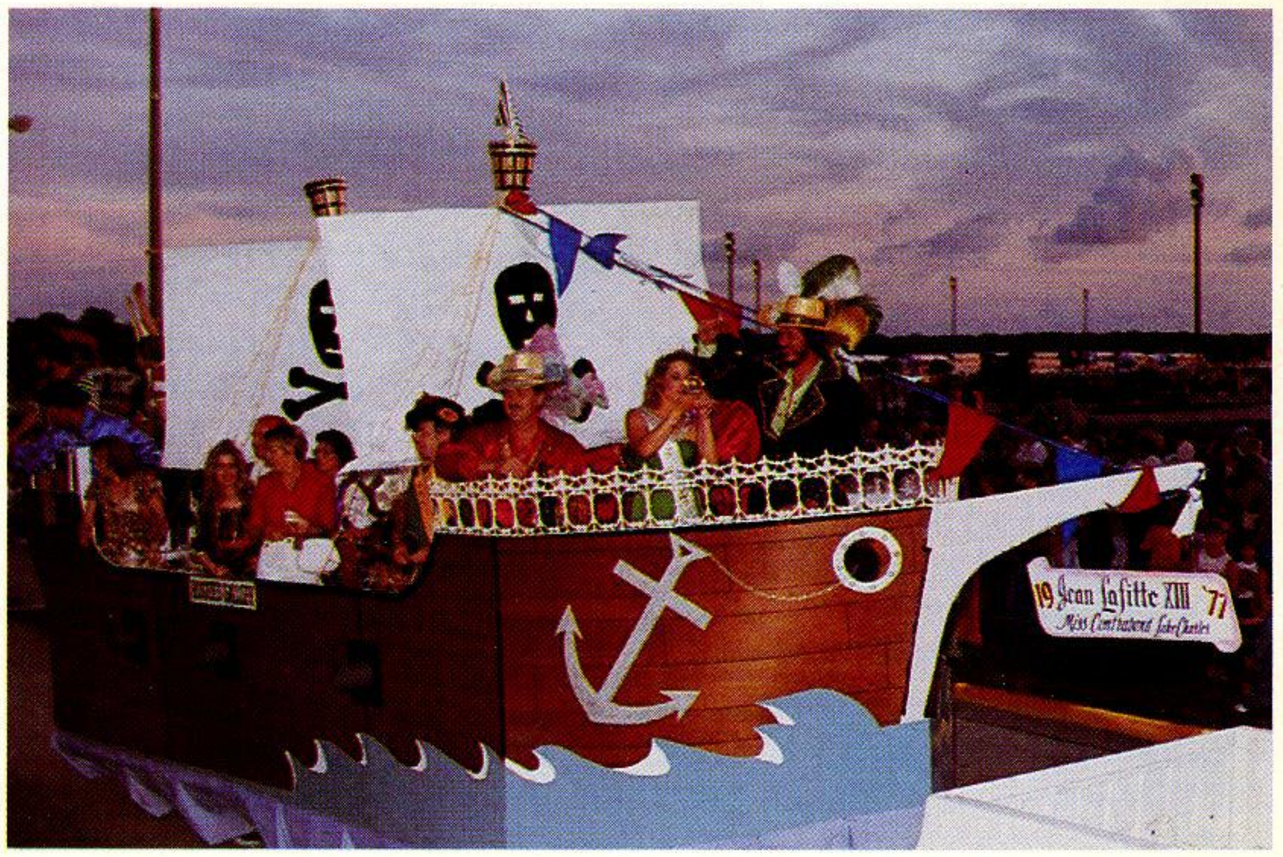
The event's scenario unfolds with a mock invasion — the traditional Buccaneers' Landing — accomplished by a flotilla of small boats and pleasure craft manned by would-be pirates, all citizens of the Lake Charles area and all members of The Buccaneers civic organization.

Participants wear appropriate pirate costumes. Men wear striped shirts and vintage chapeaus (hats) or kerchiefs, further adorned with skull and crossbones emblems, along with black eyepatches and fierce grins. Lady buccaneers show up bedecked in come-hither regalia — kerchiefs, colorful blouses, revealing short pants and saucy black boots.

As the flotilla lands along the beachfront, the doughty leader of the freebooters pauses and reads aloud a proclamation that foretells a pirate occupation and rule of the city and its inhabitants for the next fortnight. In 1982, the two-week "occupation" lasts from April 27 - May 9.

By the fiery, flickering lights of blazing torches, "Lafitte" and his invaders parade boisterously through town to commandeer city hall and "dunk the mayor in the drink." This accomplished, they all head back to the beach and board their boats for an evening of celebration.

A pirate and his lady stroll in Lake Charles during earlier Contraband Days festivities.



The 1977 Miss Contraband rode along the city's streets atop a specially-designed float.

Stepping into the Past

Early on in the festival, a young woman is named pirate queen during the Miss Contraband beauty pageant. She serves as escort to the present-day Jean Lafitte, who is selected from the membership of The Buccaneers, the civic group dedicated to supporting the event. Together, the royal pair rules over Contraband Days. This year's pageant is slated for April 28.

The schedule of activities for the festival period is wide and varied throughout the 12 days and two weekends. Included on the agenda are such happenings as an arts and crafts show, a skeet shooting exhibition, a tube race on the lake, power boat racing contests, a Golden Age picnic for senior citizens, a tennis tournament and rod and custom drag races. Also planned are a sailboat regatta, a 5-mile-long foot race, baton twirling championships, a Las Vegas Night featuring games of chance, square dancing exhibitions — and music, music, music by area bands of every stripe.

Cajuns and would-be Cajuns are kings during Cajun Day (May 1 this year), dedicated to music and folklore of the area's major ethnic heritage.

A highlight for hungry visitors is the Lafitte Fabulous Fest-of-Foods, held at Lake Charles' prestigious civic center, showcasing regional cuisine and the local abundance of seafood.

Coming as it does between spring and summer, Contraband Days resembles a pirate fantasy-come-to-life along the shores of "Charley's Lake." As the former inhabitants of Barataria Bay found haven in Lake Charles almost two centuries ago, modern-day residents and visitors can discover the pleasure of a fortnight's fun and diversion.

For additional information on Contraband Days, or on other attractions of the Lake Charles area, write to the Lake Charles/Calcasieu Parish Convention & Tourist Commission, 1211 North Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles 70602, or telephone the commission at (318) 436-9588. The commission can provide specific dates, times and places for festival events.□

Gus Cranow is a freelance writer based in Baton Rouge who specializes in travel, history, food and outdoor writing.

Three revelers pose for another festival-goer's camera.

A local broadcaster clowns around in a bathtub.

Photos courtesy of Louisiana Office of Tourism

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The River Bend Energy Center

An Educational Family Experience

No visit to the many attractions of St. Francisville and West Feliciana would be complete without a tour of the Energy Center at River Bend Station.

Designed with persons of all ages in mind, the center offers a unique and fascinating view into the world of energy. . . .

• Thomas Edison, himself, greets visitors to The Energy Center. In a life-like mechanical exhibit, he actually tells about the history of electricity's significant impact on the life we all enjoy today. Those first few minutes spent with this great inventor are not only informative, but will also give greater meaning to the many other displays awaiting you.

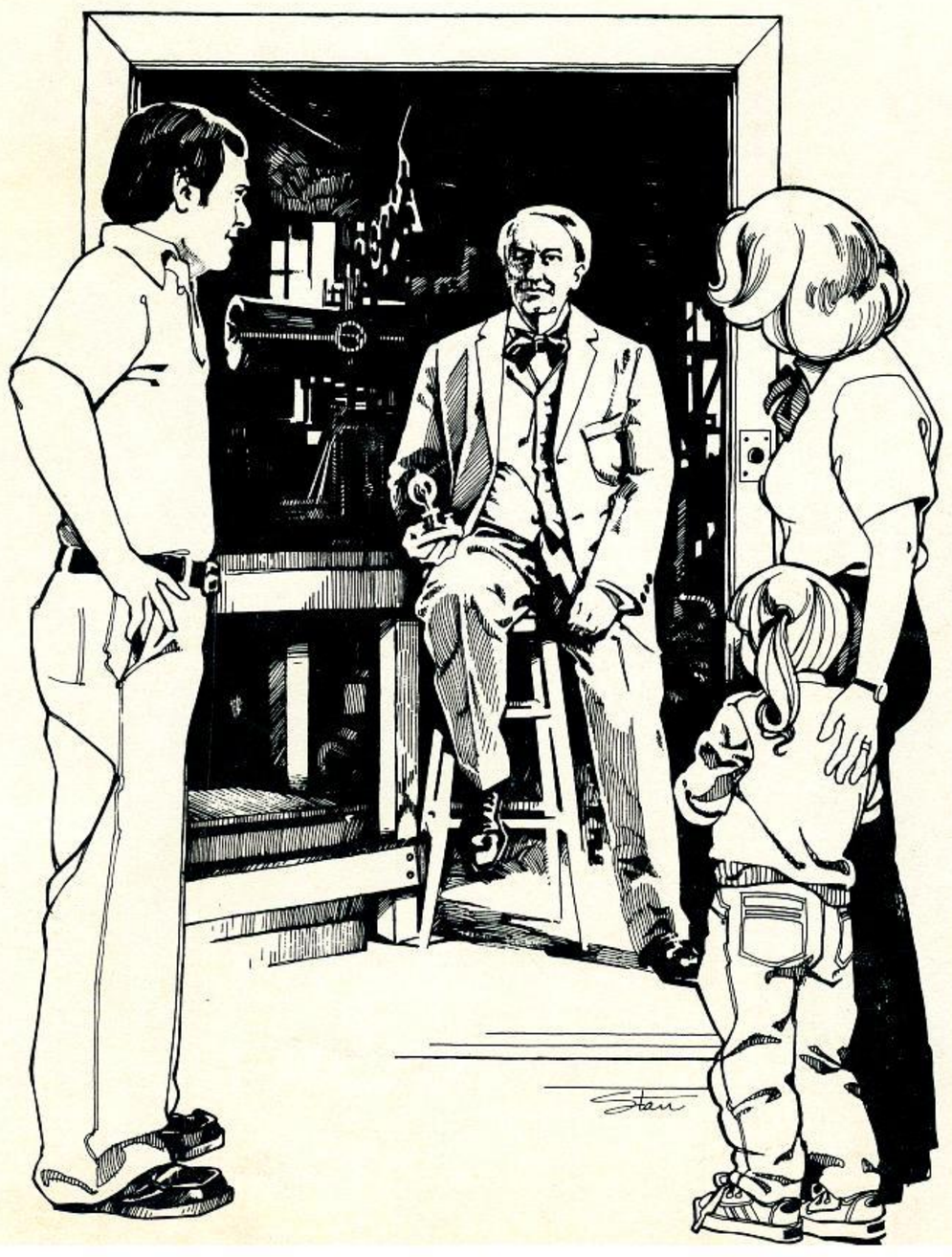
• All it takes is the push of a button to find out how the energy from coal, natural gas, fuel oil and uranium is converted into the electricity used in our homes. Exciting graphic displays make it all very easy to understand.

• And, to appreciate how much energy it takes to make electricity, you can use the "Pedal Power" generator that measures your energy output.

• You'll find the techniques utilized in the construction of River Bend described in detail, as well as many other interesting facts about nuclear energy which you may not have thought about before.

• The future holds the promise of many new and exciting ways to provide the electricity needs of our growing economy. Even though they may not yet be economically practical for large-scale application, continuing research is bringing these future energy sources closer to reality each day. Learning about these developments will help people understand the importance of those energy resources we use today.

With a wide variety of other exhibits, films and working displays, it's truly an interesting and educational experience for you and the entire family.



THE ENERGY PEOPLE
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The Energy Center is located adjacent to River Bend Station off Highway 61, just south of St. Francisville. Open Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 4:30 PM. Special group tours can be arranged by calling the center at (504) 388-0798 or (504) 635-3998 (in St. Francisville).